

**How an organisation responds to multiple institutional logics: integrating UK  
and Chinese quality assurance systems in one university**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
by Niya Wang

May 2019

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues who have helped me in providing constructive advice, participating in the interviews, granting access to documentation and proofreading the drafts. Particularly, I would like to thank Dr. Xiaojun Zhang, who has given me invaluable advice at the early stage of my research. Without their help, I would not have been able to complete this original research.

I am in debt to Dr. Peter Kahn, my first supervisor, who has ‘picked me up’ when I could not find a suitable supervisor, and has given me enormous support and informative advices during the whole process of my research. He has reviewed my thesis in much detail for several times, helping me fine-tune the literature review, the methodology and the findings. He constantly reminds me to be critical to present other researchers’ ideas and to provide more evidences to make stronger arguments. Without his guidance and advices, I would not have been able to complete the thesis within the deadline. I am also grateful to my second supervisor, Dr. José Reis Gorge. He has given me invaluable advices on my various drafts and helped improve the quality of thesis with his detailed comments.

Finally, I would also thank Professor David Sadler, Dr. Jeanette Henderson and my family for their support and encouragement during the whole journey of the Doctor of Education. Their love and support make the journey possible and give me the courage to overcome various difficulties.

## **Abstract**

### **How an organisation responds to multiple institutional logics: integrating UK and Chinese quality assurance systems in one university**

**Niya Wang**

Transnational higher education is becoming a fast growing and increasingly researched area as China emerges as one of the most promising markets worldwide. Most research on quality assurance of transnational higher education focuses on challenges of quality assurance practice in particular regions or analyses quality assurance from the perspective of exporting countries or institutions. There is a lack of research applying institutional theory to study assurance systems of transnational higher education in China. This thesis addresses the gap through investigating the process of integrating UK and Chinese quality assurance systems at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), with the objective to identify what strategies have been adopted by the university in order to respond to potential multiple institutional logics associated with the two quality assurance systems and logics associated with the prior background and experiences of staff.

The research is a single case study. It draws on data collected from document analysis and interviews to analyse norms, values, attitudes and behaviours associated with the multiple logics. Thematic analysis has been used to analyse national quality assurance policies and notices, accreditation reports, application documents and interview data, with the aim to generate themes that can best answer the research questions, which are: (1) To what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and, if so, how do they interact with each other? (2) How has XJTLU responded to multiple institutional logics if they are evident?

The findings of the research show that XJTLU's quality assurance system is influenced by two main institutional logics: the self-regulation logic of the UK quality assurance system and the government-driven logic of Chinese quality assurance system. In addition, the attitudes and behaviours of staff in quality assurance practice are also influenced by their prior backgrounds and experiences, which may increase the institutional complexity. Three strategies that were adopted by the university to respond to the multiple logics have been identified through data analysis. The first strategy is using structural differentiation in its organisational structure to respond to the demands from different logics. The second strategy is developing the organisational identity as an innovative pace-maker of joint-venture universities to drive the behaviour of staff when they are facing challenges from multiple logics. The third strategy is constructing identity scripts for individual staff, with which staff from different countries can make sense of the logic of quality assurance system at XJTLU and can act accordingly.

The research makes contributions to both theoretical and practical development. The research enriches the theoretical framework of how the organisational structure and organisational identity shape universities' responses to multiple institutional logics, and adds to the literature of institutional theory. Existing theoretical or empirical research assumes that organisations enact single and sustainable responses (Greenwood et al., 2011). However, they ignore the possibilities that an organisation may employ several strategies to respond to multiple institutional logics and that organisation's responses can take place both on the organisational and individual levels. The analysis of this research focuses on both organisational and individual levels, and the findings indicate that structural differentiation, building organisational identity and constructing identity scripts have been adopted as the strategies to respond to multiple institutional logics. The research echoes Greenwood et al.'s (2011) call on studies on sustainability and variability of organisational responses and makes contributions to the literature of organisation's responses to multiple institutional logics.

Practically, with increasing overseas institutions of higher education wish to collaborate with Chinese universities, this research offers a reference on how to ensure the standards of the provision of transnational higher education in China.

*Key words: transnational education, quality assurance, response to multiple institutional logic*

### **Statement of Original Authorship**

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for any other award or credit at this or any institution of higher education. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis is wholly original and all material or writing published or written by others and contained herein has been duly referenced and credited.

Signature: NIYA WANG

Date: 20 October 2018

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Statement of Original Authorship.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 Contextual Background.....	13
1.2 Research Problem.....	18
1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study.....	20
1.4 Organisation of Dissertation.....	21
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Quality Assurance in Transnational Education.....	22
2.1.1 Quality Assurance Systems of Chinese and UK Higher Education.....	23
2.2.2 Quality Assurance of Transnational Education.....	30
2.2 Theoretical Frameworks.....	36
2.2.1 Institutional Theory.....	37
2.2.2 Multiple Institutional Logics.....	40
2.2.3 Multiple Institutional Logics in Higher Education.....	44
2.2.4 Organisational Response to Multiple Institutional Logics.....	46
2.3 Summary.....	48
<b>Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1 Research Aim and Questions.....	50
3.2 Research Paradigm.....	51
3.3 Research Method.....	54
3.4 Data Collection.....	57
3.4.1 Archival Documents.....	58
3.4.2 Interviews.....	62
3.5 Data Analysis.....	70
3.5.1 Thematic Analysis of Data.....	71

3.6 Validity and Reliability.....	74
3.6.1 Validity.....	74
3.6.2 Reliability.....	76
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	77
<b>Chapter Four: Findings.....</b>	<b>81</b>
4.1 Overview.....	81
4.2 Institutional Logics of Chinese and UK Quality Assurance Systems.....	84
4.2.1 Government-driven Logic of Chinese Quality Assurance System.....	84
4.2.2 Self-regulation Logic of UK Quality Assurance System.....	112
4.3 Manifestation of Multiple Logics at XJTLU and Their Relationship.....	125
4.3.1 Manifestation of Multiple Logics.....	125
4.3.2 Relationship of the Government-driven and Self-regulation Logics..	136
4.4 Strategies for Organisational Response to Multiple Institutional Logics....	150
4.4.1 Optimising Organisational Structure.....	150
4.4.2 Being Innovative in Criteria Interpretation and Programme Design...	153
4.4.3 Empowering Staff.....	160
4.5 Summary of Findings.....	165
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>166</b>
5.1 Significance of the Research.....	166
5.1.1 Significance of the Research to Theory.....	166
5.1.2 Significance of the Research to Practice.....	169
5.2 Limitations of the Research.....	171
5.3 Recommendations for Further Research.....	173
5.4 Conclusion.....	177
<b>References.....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Appendix A: Ethical Approval Form of University of Liverpool.....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Appendix B: Ethical Approval of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University.....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Appendix D: Research Consent Form.....</b>	<b>203</b>



## **List of Tables and Figures**

Table 1: Profiles of XJTLU, XJTU and UoL.....	16
Table 2: Documentation List.....	61
Table 3: Description of Participant.....	66
Table 4a: Category and sub-categories of Chinese Quality Assurance System.....	83
Table 4b: Category and sub-categories of the UK Quality Assurance System.....	84
Table 5: Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power.....	88
Table 6: Key Indicators for Institutional Degree Awarding Power.....	101
Table 7: Quality Assurance Systems and Process at XJTLU.....	134
Table 8: XJTLU Committee Structure.....	135

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Higher education is experiencing dramatic changes with the development of the world economy and new technologies. A number of new trends have evolved during this process. One of the main trends is internationalization, which refers to students' international mobility, something that helps enhance their intercultural skills. Over the last two decades, universities' internationalization activities have greatly expanded (Özcan, 2011). Many universities, especially those in developed and English-speaking countries have established internationalization strategies with the aim to provide distinctive educational opportunities and rich and varied learning experiences to students, to increase compatibility of degrees, to bring students enhanced employment opportunities in a global market and to ensure competitiveness of universities (Aydin, 2014; QAA, 2015). Since China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001, the development of transnational education in China has accelerated. Yang (2008) points out that the Chinese government sees transnational education as an important means to improve the capacity of Chinese universities, and therefore build human capital and contribute to economic development. In this context, efforts towards the internationalization of higher education through partnership with world top universities have been enhanced (Feng, 2013). Many overseas universities have also pioneered academic partnership with Chinese universities.

According to UNESCO (2005), transnational higher education refers to the cross national jurisdictional border's flow of teachers, students, programmes and institutions. With an increasing number of collaborations in transnational education, it has become a much researched area. However, most studies of transnational education are more attentive to cultural differences and learning styles (Heffernan et al., 2010; Yang, 2012), or are comparative studies on joint-venture programmes (Miliszewska et al., 2012; Feng, 2013). Quality assurance of transnational education has not been given enough attention. UNESCO (2005) defines quality assurance (QA) as the means by which an institution can guarantee,

with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. Woodhouse (1999) refers to quality assurance as a systematic, structured and continuous process for quality maintenance and improvement.

Slips of standards of transnational education may cause lack of trust in transnational education and inequity for students in importing institutions. In order to safeguard the quality of transnational education, regulatory frameworks and guidelines have been developed by UNESCO and the main exporting countries. For instance, UNESCO has issued *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* (UNESCO, 2005), the USA developed *The Principles of Good Practice of Overseas International Education Programmes for Non-US Nationals* (CIHE, 2003), and the UK Quality Assurance Agency published *Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (including e-learning)* (QAA, 2004). To enhance the quality of transnational higher education in China, Chinese Ministry of Education also developed an overarching regulation, which is called *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese–Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003). The regulations emphasize that Chinese-foreign cooperative institutions should aim at improving the quality of learning and teaching and importing overseas educational programmes to Chinese institutions.

Even though regulatory frameworks and guidelines have been developed on international and national levels, possibilities for slips of academic standards are still high due to the geographical distance between the home campuses and importing countries (McBurnie, 2018). McBurnie (2018) notes that there are tensions between academic and commercial priorities in transnational education so that great attention needs to be paid to quality assurance system of transnational education. Although there has been emerging interest in quality assurance in transnational education, the focus of existing research is either on challenges for

quality assurance practice in certain regions (Poon-McBrayer, 2011; Lim, 2010), or analysis of quality assurance from the perspectives for quality assurance agencies (Hou, et al, 2016), when the scholarly literature on quality assurance of transnational education are examined, it is found that the quality assurance of joint-venture universities in China is understudied.

Through examination of various approaches to higher education accountability, Brown (2017) observes that universities have to balance numerous incompatible influences therefore are subject to demands of multiple logics. According to Brown (2017), the notion of institutional logic refers to a framework to understand the responses of actors. He points out that ‘individual fields of higher education accountability draw their logics from the broader social institutions that they engage --- the market, state, and profession.’ (Brown, 2017, p. 43), so in order to further understand the accountability of higher education, the broader social institutions must be examined. Institutions of transnational higher education have to respond to calls from multiple cultural and social demands of different countries, therefore, their quality assurance systems may be influenced by multiple institutional logics which are embedded in broader social institutions. For example, joint-venture universities in China have to comply with the quality assurance systems of Chinese and the foreign partner universities, so they may face multiple institutional logics associated with different quality assurance systems and staff with varied background and experiences.

Institutional logics are the ‘socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality’ (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). Many organisations’ structure and practices reflect the influence of multiple institutional logics (Greenwood et al., 2011). In order to develop an in-depth understanding of how joint-venture universities in China respond to the demands of multiple

institutional logics, further research connecting quality assurance to multiple institutional logics could address the gap in existing literature.

This chapter introduces the background, research problem, significance of study and organisation of dissertation. The first section introduces the contextual background of the research. The second section explains the origin of the research problem and how it relates to my professional background. The third section lays out the purpose and significance of the study. The fourth section presents the overview of the organisation of the dissertation.

### **1.1 Contextual Background**

As one of the regions with the most active participation in transnational higher education, Asian countries especially China and India have seen an increasing number of students with transnational education experience. Over the past decades, China has become one of the world's largest market for transnational education. Research indicates that China has become the biggest sending country with hundreds of thousands of students studying in the US, Canada, Australia, UK and other European countries. Research also shows that China is a fast-growing receiver of students from overseas countries (Lasanowski & Verbik, 2007).

Transnational education in China has grown rapidly since China's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001. The development of transnational education is closely associated with China's economic and social reforms. With China's economy moving from government-driven to market-oriented, building close links between education and the market has become the direction for the development of Chinese higher education. Bie & Yi (2014) observe that with the development of market-oriented economy, labour market and employment demands of industrial sectors have greater influences on student enrolment of universities and the development of degree programmes in China. Educational policies have been developed by economists to 'meet the needs of a socialist

economy', and education as a key driver of social and economic development has been used as a stimulus for economic growth (Lao, 2003). The Chinese government has developed key research bases and national laboratories to integrate the best practice of foreign universities with the top Chinese universities to enhance the international standing of China's higher education. Higher education as an important means to build a country's human capital, competitive capacity, status and innovative abilities (Garrett, 2004), has also become a common format for transnational education in China.

According to Knight (2007), there are different modes of transnational education, including franchising, twinning, double/joint degree, articulation, validation and distance education. She points out that Chinese law requires that all foreign providers collaborate with local institutions, so all transnational higher education in China are joint-ventures. These joint-ventures exist in the mode of a franchising programme, which refers to 'An arrangement whereby a provider in source Country authorizes a provider in Country B to deliver its course/programme/service in Country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by provider in Country A.' (Knight, 2007, p. 137), or the in the mode of independent institution, which means 'Foreign Provider A (a traditional university, a commercial company or alliance/ network) establishes in Country B a standalone HEI to offer courses/programmes and award qualifications.' (Knight, 2007, p. 138). Based on Knight's definition, the concept of independent joint-venture university in China used in this study refers to the standalone new university set up jointly by a foreign university and a Chinese university, and the university has independent legal identity.

The information shown on the official website of China Ministry of Education (MoE, 2018) indicates that there are 930 approved partnerships with a total of 450,000 students having been enrolled. However, only a handful of these partnerships are independent joint-venture universities, since the publishing of

*Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* in 2003. There are eight independent joint-venture universities approved by the Ministry of Higher Education in mainland China. They are: University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), New York University Shanghai, Duke Kunshan University, Wenzhou-Kean University, Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), Beijing Normal University - Hong Kong Baptist University United International College, Shenzhen MSU-BIT University and Guangdong Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Knight defines double degrees as 'an arrangement whereby providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which students receive qualifications from both providers' (2007, p. 137). Among the eight independent joint-venture universities in China, only half of them award double degrees, which means a degree from the foreign partner institution and a degree from the independent joint-venture university. The other four joint-venture universities only award the degrees of the foreign partner institutions.

XJTLU is an independent joint-venture university set up jointly by two universities: Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU) in China and the University of Liverpool (UoL) in the UK. The profile of the three institutions are shown in Table 1. XJTLU is one of the four independent joint-venture universities that award double degrees. As an accredited institution of the University of Liverpool, XJTLU can deliver taught programmes of studies leading to the award of the UoL degrees. XJTLU can also award its own degree which is approved by the Ministry of Education of China. The University is currently offering more than 70 undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in the subjects of science, engineering, management, arts and humanities, with over 15,000 registered students including nearly 1,000 international students. The articulation arrangement between XJTLU and the UoL allows XJTLU's students to transfer to the UoL to complete their final two years in Liverpool for the undergraduate degree. Around 4,000 students are currently studying at the UoL.

Knight (2007) refers to quality assurance as the quality auditing, assessment, accreditation and other processes that are used to review the performance of institutions of higher education. Quality assurance system is the framework of the policies, procedures and process established by an institution to ensure quality. To award double degrees, XJTLU has to develop a quality assurance system complying with the requirements of the UK and Chinese quality assurance systems. XJTLU has established quality assurance policies and procedures integrating Chinese and UK quality assurance systems with a focus on external examining and internal quality control.

***Table 1: Profile of XJTLU, XJTU and UoL***

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU)</b>	<b>Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU)</b>	<b>University of Liverpool (UoL)</b>
Year founded	2006	1896	1881
Location	Suzhou, China	Xi'an, China	Liverpool, UK
Total students	15,000	38,000	22,000
Total faculty staff	800	3,070	2,514
International students	1,000	2,400	7,700
PhD students	216	5,568	4,000
Degree programmes	90	160	400
Relationship	Independent joint-venture university and accredited institution of the UoL	Chinese Parent university of XJTLU	UK Parent university of XJTLU

The quality assurance system developed by XJTLU monitors and controls the standards of the university's provision on five levels. On a national level, as all XJTLU taught programmes are leading to the award the UoL degrees, the university is subject to the scrutiny of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the UK. As a university in China, XJTLU has to undertake the various quality evaluation conducted by the Chinese educational. On an institutional level, XJTLU has to go through institutional accreditation and re-accreditation by the UoL every five years, as well as an annual monitoring visit, the routine scrutiny of programme and the monitoring of assessment processes. XJTLU also has its



own quality assurance processes to guarantee the quality of its provision. At the departmental level, each department organises an Internal Periodical Review every four years, regular Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee meetings and Departmental Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings. At the programme level, XJTLU has adopted an Annual Programme Review process to review provision of each programme. On the module level, creation of new module specification and amendments to existing module specifications require approval. In addition, peer review of teaching and internal and external examining are also practiced at XJTLU to ensure quality.

I joined XJTLU since its inception in 2006. Over the past twelve years, I have witnessed the fast development of the university. As Head of the President's Office, my role includes overseeing the quality of executive support to the Senior Management Team, assisting implementation of university strategies and supporting institutional key projects and new initiatives. To fulfil this role, it is important to develop a good understanding of transnational education in China and reflect on the university's operational and practice on regular basis. According to Wakeling (2014), reflective practitioner refers to professionals who are able to respond to social environment around them through continuous process of learning and modifying practice. During my service at XJTLU, I have worked for the Academic Dean, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Executive President of the university. These experiences offer me the opportunities to observe and reflect on the operation of the university from the academic and professional service perspectives.

Based on my observation and reflection, I noticed that many students have chosen to study at XJTLU because it awarded double degrees, and students could obtain international education experiences without going aboard. Having participated in major quality assurance activities, such as the accreditation by the University of Liverpool and the evaluation for degree awarding power by the Chinese Ministry

of Education, I have developed some interests in investigating how to integrate the UK quality assurance system in a Chinese quality assurance framework. Clegg & Stevenson (2013) claim that it might be difficult for insider researchers to see outside of their own context, since they may understand and interpret the context in terms of their insider knowledge, and therefore assume the context as common sense. As a practitioner and inside researcher, I realise that I need to pay attention to this potential pitfall, which may be caused by my insider knowledge, and I understand the possible implications of my role at the university during the research process, especially during the data collection and data interpretation stages. Ethical issues also need to be considered and mitigating steps need to be taken to avoid ethical risks. Detailed arrangements will be reported in the methodology chapter.

The objective of this study is to investigate to what extent the quality assurance system adopted by XJTLU is influenced by multiple logics that may be associated with the UK and Chinese quality assurance systems and how the university responds to possible multiple institutional logics. Because of my role in the university and the insights developed through my work experiences, the objective has emerged as a working hypothesis which is expected to be verified whether the hypothesis will be born out through the research. Quality assurance is one of the key issues of transnational education, because as pointed out by Zwanikken et al. (2013), the expansion of transnational education is partly driven by economic factors. Profit providers may lower the standards of programmes delivered in another country due to financial reasons. McBurnie (2008) also notes that geographical distance between the transnational education delivering site and the provider's home campus may increase the risk of lowering the quality, as it is more difficult to monitor the quality of provision from a long distance, and it is not possible to monitor the daily operation of the quality practice of an institution in another country. It is also possible that profit providers may prioritize commercial gains over academic standards which may result in sacrifice of quality.

XJTLU as a joint-venture university in China offering transnational higher education provides a suitable setting for studying quality assurance of transnational higher education in China.

Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that institutions of higher education are often subject to multiple logics such as the logic of science and of commerce. Smith (2010) points out that the underlying values and ideologies associated with transnational education should be paid attention to when analysing the quality assurance of transnational education, because the exporting country's culture, customs and values have been embedded and expressed in the quality assurance framework and guidelines. Institutions of transnational higher education are subject to multiple regulatory regimes which are embedded with multiple normative orders and values. The understandings, attitudes and behaviours associated with multiple institutional logics may result in conflicts. XJTLU as the one of the four joint-venture universities awarding double degrees in China, it is likely that the university will encounter multiple logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. Therefore, it provides an ideal empirical site for studying the extent to which an institution of higher education may respond to multiple institutional logics.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

During my first eight years' at XJTLU, I have worked with the Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs to help establish the academic system of the university. As a core member in the university leadership support team, I have contributed to major institutional projects related to internal quality assurance and external accreditation. From 2007 until 2014, I participated in the accreditation and re-accreditation by the University of Liverpool, the application for Chinese Degree Awarding Power, new degree programme development and validation. My role in these projects was not only limited to administrative support, I have led compiling key documentation and drafting some reports, and participated in key meetings

with the accreditation panel. Brannick & Coghlan (2007) argues that although insider research has been criticized for being too close to the setting to produce valid research, the value of insider research should be reaffirmed because of the insights insider researchers have developed through lived experience. Based on this argument, it is believed that my experiences of quality assurance system at XJTLU will have positive contribution to the investigation of the research questions, namely, (1) To what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and, if so, how do they interact with each other; and (2) How has XJTLU responded to multiple institutional logics if they are evident?

In order to address the current research gap in quality assurance of transnational higher education in China, and apply institutional theory to transnational education, I focus my research on the quality assurance system of XJTLU. I am particularly interested in finding out to what extent institutional logics are associated with Chinese and UK quality assurance system, and how they manifest in the practice of XJTLU. What the relationships between any multiple institutional logics are if they are in evidence, and what strategies XJTLU has adopted to respond to possible multiple institutional logics.

Considering the research focus and research context, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. To what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and, if so, how they interact with each other?
2. How has XJTLU responded to multiple institutional logics if they are evident?

Answers to these research questions can help develop in-depth understanding of the quality assurance of transnational education in China, and of how educational organisations may respond to multiple institutional logics.

### **1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The research is conducted in the context that transnational higher education has expanded rapidly in China. However, the rise of transnational education is not purely driven by development of human resources, fostering global exchange of talented students, and increasing international understanding. It is also driven by commercial benefits, so some transnational education projects may lower the quality in order to gain financial benefits. To ensure the quality of transnational provisions, quality assurance framework and guidelines have been developed by international and national organisations. Although quality assurance of transnational higher education has become an increasingly researched area, studies on quality assurance of transnational higher education in China are still scarce.

The purpose of the research is to study how an organisation of transnational education responds to multiple institutional logics that may be associated with quality assurance systems of different countries. Based on the research questions and research purpose, case study has been adopted to investigate the research problem. More detailed rationales for choosing case study as the research method will be explained in the methodology chapter. When selecting the case, considerations have been given to decide whether single or multiple case studies would be more suitable for the research. Because the research questions require the study of a case for changes over time, and my experiences at XJTLU can help develop in-depth understanding of quality assurance of transnational education, XJTLU has been identified as the single case for the research. This research offers a unique case study of the process of integrating Chinese and UK quality assurance systems in a Chinese institution of transnational higher education.

The research makes contributions both to theoretical and practical development. Theoretically, the research enriches the theoretical framework of how organisational structure and identity shape universities' responses to multiple instructional logics, and adds to the literature of institutional theory. Practically,

Yang (2008) indicates that as China is becoming the most promising market for transnational education, more overseas institutions of higher education may wish to collaborate with Chinese universities to deliver degree programmes jointly. This research offers a reference to overseas institutions on how to ensure that the quality and standards of the exporting institutions are not compromised.

#### **1.4 Organisation of Dissertation**

The study is organised in the following order. Chapter 1 introduces the background, the purpose and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature and explains the theoretical framework of the research. The literature review will focus on multiple institutional logics, despite not knowing for sure whether multiple institutional logics will be evident. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for this study. Chapter 4 provides a description of the main findings from the data analysis and discusses the findings. Chapter 5 summarizes the case study and presents implications for further study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

With transnational education in China growing rapidly, ensuring the standards of the programmes delivered in China are equivalent to the home university has become a common concern for many universities. To guarantee the quality of the joint-venture universities in China, a robust quality assurance system that integrates the requirements both of China and the institution's home country has to be established. The study applies institutional theory to analyse the quality assurance system of a university offering transnational education in China, in order to understand how the university responds to multiple institutional logics that may be associated with the quality assurance system of the importing and exporting countries. Therefore, the focuses of the literature review will be multiple institutional logics and organisational responses. The case study seeks to find patterns or themes in XJTLU's historical activities of establishing its quality assurance system to explore whether multiple institutional logics are manifested in its quality assurance practice.

This chapter firstly reviews literature on the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, which provides background for the case study. This is followed by a review of literature on quality assurance of transnational higher education. The review helps identify current gap in the literature on the quality assurance of transnational education in China. The literature review is then centred on studies of multiple institutional logics, which would provide theoretical framework for the case study if multiple logics are manifested in the quality assurance system. Literature on organisational responses to multiple institutional logics is reviewed to underpin possible findings from the case study.

### **2.1 Quality Assurance in Transnational Higher Education**

The following sections will explore literature on the quality assurance systems of China and the UK, and the quality assurance of transnational higher education, with the aim to provide contextual background for the case study and to identify

any gap in the existing literature on quality assurance of transnational education in China.

### **2.1.1 Quality Assurance Systems of Chinese and UK Higher Education**

When institutions work across international borders, at least two quality assurance protocols are involved (Kinser, 2011). According to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, degree awarding bodies have to consider and take account of the QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics (QAA, 2015). In particular, 'the UK degree-awarding body is ultimately responsible for the standards and quality of the qualification it awards, irrespective of who delivers it or where it is delivered' (QAA, 2015, p.10). Therefore, Chinese joint-venture universities in partnership with UK universities have to follow the UK quality assurance system, as well as to ensure they comply with Chinese educational requirements and standards. Woodhouse defines quality assurance as 'policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced' (1999, p. 30). As joint-venture universities have to concurrently work with different quality assurance systems in importing and exporting countries, more challenges emerge with the expansion of transnational education in China.

The main drivers of expanding transnational education in China are multi-faceted: (1) The Chinese government's direction to 'open up' the educational market to the outside world to stimulate competition and development of the education industry; (2) Chinese society's strong demands on high-quality education from western universities, and (3) exporting institutions' increasing reliance on fee income from international students. However, the closure of some branch campuses of Australian and British universities in Southeast Asia has caused a wave of concerns regarding the quality of transnational education in China. Poon-McPrayer's (2011) research on the regulatory framework and registration assessment process for transnational education in Hong Kong reveals that there are still loopholes in quality assurance despite existence of a comprehensive legal



regulatory framework. This has led to concerns about quality assurance, especially the scrutiny of implementation of policies and procedures related to quality assurance. Concerns for quality identified by Poon-McPrayer (2011) include the over reliance of the exporting institutions on document-based assessment rather than onsite visits, which may lead to inadequate monitoring. He also raises the issue of the ethics of exporting institutions because they may focus on monetary gain and reduce the quality of provision. A third concern is that a lack of data collection on transnational higher education can also impact understanding of the operation of transnational higher education. Although Poon-McPrayer (2011) identifies the quality concerns on transnational education in Hong Kong, as the regulatory framework and registration system of transnational education in Hong Kong are quite different from mainland China, some of the quality concerns on transnational higher education in mainland China, such as some transnational programmes are marketable and low student satisfaction, have not been covered by the study.

In 2007, the Ministry of Education issued a notice on joint education programmes because it was felt that the quality control of some joint education programmes was poor. In Yang's (2008) reflection on issues of transnational higher education in mainland China, the for-profit nature of some of the transnational education programmes is the main concern for quality assurance of transnational education in China. He also points out that the Chinese government is the approval body of establishing transnational programme or institutions. However, a lack of continuous intervention after the approval is another concern, because in this circumstance, the quality of the provision of transnational education is reliant on individual teaching staff and programme coordinators.

The research of Poon-McPrayer (2011) & Yang (2008) provides an excellent starting point for my research. The research setting of this case study is a joint-venture university in China, although the concerns raised by Poon-McPrayer &

Yang are not necessarily relevant to the actual practice of the quality assurance of XJTLU, the policy and regulatory environment of Chinese transnational education discussed in their studies is an important parameter for my research. Also, the quality concerns raised in their study may be also evident in transnational higher education in China. Therefore, my research on the integration of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems at a joint-venture university may offer possible solutions to avoid loopholes in the existing quality assurance of transnational education in China. The concerns on quality of transnational education may be similar, but the focus of quality assurance systems of different countries are divergent.

Puzziferro & Shelton (2008) propose that a quality assurance system should provide consistent assessment of learning design, content, and pedagogy. However, because the focus of the quality assurance systems of China and the UK is different, how joint-venture universities can establish a quality assurance system that synergises the differences is a key question. According to Bie & Yi (2014), the quality assurance system of China emphasizes the quality of teaching, so the quality standards are set up around the quality of instruction, teaching competence of faculty, teaching supervision and student evaluation of instruction. On the other hand, the UK quality assurance system pays more attention to student experiences with external examining as a key feature. Because according to Brown (2011), the internal quality control of UK universities relies on external examiners. The different focuses of the Chinese and UK quality assurance system reflect the different conceptions of quality of higher education (Ryan, 2015). Wang (2014) summarizes three different approaches and procedures for quality assurance in different context. The standards-based approach focuses on pre-determined qualitative and quantitative standards developed by a third-party, the minimum requirement approach emphasizes fulfilment of minimum standards, and the high standard approach assesses higher education institutions against higher benchmarks. Chinese and UK quality assurance systems use different approaches

for quality assurance.

### *The Quality Assurance Systems of Higher Education in China*

The quality control of institutions of higher education is mainly performed by educational authorities in China (Zhang & Wang, 2015). Universities have to apply for approval from government bodies such as the Ministry of Education and the provincial Department of Education to establish a new university, introduce new degree programmes and award degrees to students. To obtain the approval, aspects such as educational strategy, staff and faculty, facilities, programme development and curriculum implementation are evaluated.

In a review of quality assurance mechanism of Chinese higher education, Wang (2014) explores the history of the development of quality assurance system of Chinese higher education, and the quality assurance system's implications for universities' autonomy and accountability. Wang (2014) notes that a systematic review of the quality of higher education institutions started in 1994. Both the minimum standard approach and the high standard approach have been used with the former for evaluation of newly established universities, and the latter for evaluation of top universities. The *Higher Education Institutions Undergraduate Teaching Evaluation Programme* introduced in 2002 is the first comprehensive quality assurance framework for institutions of higher education in China, which consists of three stages including self-assessment, inspection by experts and evaluation, and dissemination of evaluation results. Key evaluation indicators include mission, staff, equipment, degree programme development and reform, management, learning environment and outcome (HEEC, 2013). These evaluation indicators are used for all universities that offer undergraduate degrees in China. In her study of the quality assurance policy in China, Huang (2014) indicates that the Central Government applies the same set of evaluation indicators to all institutions of higher education, despite the fact that there are different types of institutions of higher education in China, such as research-oriented, profession-

oriented, and technique-oriented. It was concerned that this may cause complaints about the use of inappropriate criteria for evaluating different types of universities.

In addition to the national quality evaluation mechanisms, performance based funding is another method for quality control in China (Wang, 2014). Projects such as the ‘211 project’ and ‘985 project’ are the two most prominent performance-based funding projects for institutions of higher education in China. Universities listed in these projects can get extra funding from the government to improve their international competitiveness. In order to improve the quality of their education, many Chinese universities established the self-regulation mechanism to evaluate their teaching and research (Wang, 2014).

Existing research also approaches quality assurance from cultural perspectives. In a comparative study of the national quality assurance frameworks for higher education of European and Asian countries, Billing (2004) uses cultural differences to explain the different patterns of national quality assurance framework. He claims that different country’s organisational preferences influence the pattern of national quality assurance framework. For example, the UK is low on power distance and uncertainty avoidance, so the quality assurance of the UK prefers coordination of work through mutual agreement. On the contrary, China is high on power distance and low on uncertainty avoidance, so that direct supervision is a preferred quality assurance pattern. Although increasing attention has been paid to quality assurance of higher education in China, the existing quality assurance mechanism of higher education in China has been criticized for exclusion of student’s opinion in the quality evaluation and for the overwhelming procedures and paperwork, which may affect the effectiveness of quality assurance system of higher education in China (Wang, 2014). Based on a search of existing literature on the key words of ‘quality assurance’, ‘transnational education’ and ‘China’ in Social Sciences Citation Index and EBSCO of the

University of Liverpool's online library, it appears that the quality assurance system of transnational education in China is understudied. Most of published articles focus on the quality assurance of public universities in China. Only a few studies briefly discuss the quality assurance of transnational education in China, with the focus on development history and regulations related to transnational education in China (Huang, 2003), or as a part of analysis of regulations of main receiving countries (Knight, 2007). Mok & Xu's (2008) study on transnational higher education in Zhejiang Province of China talks about the quality assurance of transnational education in China as part of the discussion of major issues and challenges for transnational higher education in China. Details of Mok & Xu's study (2008) will be discussed in the later section.

#### *Quality Assurance System of Higher Education in the UK*

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) of the UK was established in 2001 by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which provides reference points for qualifications, subjects and programmes (McClaran, 2010). According to a recent review of the QAF by the QAA, the evaluation of academic infrastructure includes four key components: frameworks for higher education qualifications, which describe the achievements represented by higher education qualifications; codes of practice, which are the guidelines for universities and colleges to maintain quality and standards; subject benchmark statements, which set out the expectations about standards of degrees in different subject areas; and programme specifications, which describe the intended learning outcomes of degree programmes and how to achieve these outcomes. Based on the QAF, the QAA conducts institutional audits on a rolling basis to provide public assurances of standards of the provision of institutions of higher education in the UK (McClaran, 2010). In addition to the QAF, external examining, public information about higher education, and student engagement with learning and teaching through their feedback on teaching quality are also useful methods for assuring the quality of higher education in the UK.

The external examining system is the most unique feature of the UK quality assurance system, because the degree students awarded are classified and only a few countries such as Denmark and Malta have the external examining system. Brown (2011) claims that UK universities rely on external examiners to review the quality of teaching and assessment and to ensure that standards of student's performance is comparable to other UK institutions. Jackson (1997) notes that there is increasing external evaluation of quality of higher education, as 'external evaluation helps institutions/individuals/groups to compare their practices and performance with reference to one or more external perspectives and it provides an assurance mechanism for independent checking and verifying the expectations are being met' (Jackson, 1997, p. 46). Both Brown's (2011) and Jackson's (1997) comments reveal that external examining plays an important role in the UK's quality assurance arrangements.

Although academics agree that the quality of teaching in higher education is an important issue, they also argue that the current quality assurance system in the UK is highly prescriptive and has caused issues with trust and accountability (Hoecht, 2006). Hoecht's (2006) study on the quality assurance in UK higher education explores academics' perception of the impact of quality assurance on their work. He argues that the current quality audit process of the UK is a 'one-way accountability' (Hoecht, 2006, p. 67) and makes academics feel less trusted and more controlled and may jeopardise innovations in learning and teaching.

A review of literature related to the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems shows that both China and the UK have established national quality assurance policies and processes to ensure the standards of provision of institutions of higher education. However, there are different approaches and focuses. The Chinese quality assurance system uses a standard-based approach that applies pre-determined qualitative and quantitative standards developed by the government to evaluate universities. It places an emphasis on teaching rather than learning. The

quality review of China focuses on the content of the curriculum and how the content is delivered, rather than student learning experiences and learning outcomes, and government takes the main responsibility for the assessment of quality of higher education institutions. The UK quality assurance system employs a fit-for-purpose approach to evaluate universities' performance, with a focus on external examining and student experience.

### **2.1.2 Quality Assurance of Transnational Education**

The fast development of transnational higher education originated from a variety of demands for the development of higher education. Doorbar & Bateman (2008) point out that one of the drivers for developing transnational education is the need to incorporate more international elements to research and teaching in university. Ziguras & McBurnie (2008) claim that liberalisation of trade also leads to the growth of transnational higher education in countries where higher educational resources are limited. Hodson & Thomas (2001) indicate that because of decreased government funding, UK universities have to seek additional income streams through collaborating with partners outside Europe. Mok & Han (2016) point out that the fast development of transnational education in China is driven by the need to improve the quality of national teaching and research, as well as to avoid the phenomenon of brain drain which may be caused by increasing number of students studying abroad.

Although transnational higher education may help tackle some of the challenges faced by universities, such as models of funding, student mobility and technological advances, the geographical distance between the exporting and importing universities, the contextual differences and the tensions between academic and commercial priorities may increase the possibilities of a decrease in quality. Nhan & Nguyen (2018) claim that lowering of quality of transnational education may be caused by the motive to minimise costs or a lack of sufficient infrastructure. In addition, the importing institution's lack of ability and

experience in evaluating the quality of the partner or degree programme may also cause a decrease in quality.

To ensure the quality of transnational education provision, policies and regulations have been developed by importing and exporting countries, as well as international organisations. For example, UNESCO (2005) developed *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* which provides a framework for international collaboration. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has organised the Bologna seminar on quality assurance for transnational education. The report of the seminar (ENQA, 2012) recommends that all education programmes offered by a country's institutions of higher education should be subject to its national regulatory framework, irrespective the country in which the programmes are delivered, and that the quality assurance agencies in the exporting and importing countries should cooperate and communicate more closely to ensure the quality of transnational higher education (ENQA, 2010). Major exporting countries such as the US, the UK, and Australia also developed respective codes of practice for collaborative provision.

Although major exporting countries have developed guidelines for quality assurance of transnational education, they have taken different attitudes towards equivalence and opportunities for adaptation. Smith (2010) conducts a study to analyse the roles and responsibilities of the exporting institutions of higher education presented in the code of practice of the US, UK and Australia, with the aim to identify how they deal with issues of equivalence and opportunities for adaptation of quality assurance. The study reveals that although the codes of practice are not regulatory, they offer guidance on ensuring the quality of provision of transnational higher education and the experiences of students. Smith (2010) also points out that the codes of practice of the US, UK and Australia all emphasize the power of the exporting institutions, but the UK and Australian



codes leave space for more collaboration with the transnational partners in programme design, because ‘education is transferred overseas, arguably the aim is not for the courses to be the exact replicas of those in the awarding institutions, but rather that programmes provide equivalent experiences’ (Smith, 2010, p. 802).

Smith’s (2010) study suggests that quality assurance of transnational education should move away from a regulated model with rigid control to one that emphasizes more cooperation between exporting and importing institutions, which would enable them to maintain their market position. The study provides a good direction for the quality assurance systems in transnational education, as they may be influenced by multiple institutional logics associated with the cultural and regulatory contexts of both exporting and importing countries. The study also suggests that good collaboration and space for flexibility will help the quality assurance system developed in the importing institution satisfy the requirements of both countries. Although Smith’s study offers textual analysis of the interpretations, motivations and underlying approaches to quality assurance of transnational education, it does not offer solutions on how to enhance the quality of transnational education through collaboration between importing and exporting institutions. Therefore, the practical values of the study are limited.

Researchers approach quality assurance of transnational higher education from a range of different perspectives and most of them are from exporting countries’ perspectives. Pyvis’ (2011) study on the quality of an Australian transnational programme delivered in a Chinese university indicates that the home programme should not be the single point of reference for quality, as the local educational tradition should also be respected. He claims that the exporting institution should develop context-sensitive measures of quality and conduct evaluation of quality of transnational programmes, which should consider contextual educational traditions. Pyvis’ comment on the importance of contextual educational traditions is quite useful for transnational education in China, as Chinese students’ learning

behaviour are different from those from other countries. Without paying attention to this contextual educational tradition, and help students to adjust their learning preference during the transitional period, it would be difficult for students to succeed in transnational education.

Cultural difference in transnational education has been highlighted by several researchers. Sharp (2017) studies the quality of transnational education from the perspective of distinction between academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. He argues that the quality of the learning opportunity has to be context-dependent for transnational education, because cultural differences in learning preference and cognitive styles of exporting and importing institutions may lead to different levels of quality of learning opportunities. On the other hand, the academic standards of the exporting and importing institutions should be unified. Although Sharp's (2017) study emphasizes the need to pay attention to cultural different whilst using unified academic standards for the exporting and importing institutions, how to bridge the gap between different learning preference and cognitive styles of exporting and importing institutions have not been mentioned.

Transnational education has not only caused concerns on quality, recognition of qualification of transnational education is another concern for some researchers. Hou et al.'s (2017) research focuses on a slightly different angle of transnational higher education. They conduct a study on the recognition of joint degrees delivered by several cross-border higher education intuitions that supply only one certificate. They point out that the obstacle of recognition of joint degrees is mainly caused by national legislation which only recognises programmes established in accordance with its regulations. In order to facilitate the recognition of joint degrees, international quality assurance agencies and national governments should work together to develop guidelines and sign mutual recognition agreements. Hou et al.'s (2017) study raises an important point about

the role of collaboration between quality assurance agencies and national government in ensuring quality of transnational education, which has not been considered by some countries including China.

The above research provides background to understand the challenges of quality assurance of transnational education. Although some of the studies raise the contextual and cultural issues of quality assurance of transnational education, most of them focus on exporting countries rather than importing countries. The quality assurance of major importing countries such as China has not been touched.

#### *Quality Assurance of Transnational Education in China*

A small number of studies on transnational education in China has been published in recent years. Yang (2008) draws on Chinese and English literature on transnational education, and Chinese government's documents to analyse the current status of transnational education in China, and to discuss the cause of concerns in areas such as quality assurance, legal status, and cultural appropriateness. Yang's study points out that the Chinese government takes the main responsibility for quality assurance of transnational education, but a lack of continuous monitoring of quality has caused concern. Mok & Xu's (2008) study on transnational higher education in Zhejiang Province also reveals that the responsibility of quality control of transnational education falls into individual institutions after government's approval. The Ministry of Education or other educational authorities only occasionally send inspectors to check the quality of transnational education institutions.

Rather than focus on contextual background of transnational education in China, Mok & Han' (2016) conduct a study of transnational education offered in mainland China, by surveying students in joint-venture universities in China. The aim of the study is to analyse whether an increase in students choosing study overseas or in joint-venture universities affects the situation of 'brain drain' (Kwok & Leland,

1982, p. 91) and graduate employment in China. They argue that the exchange of transnational capitals through students studying overseas or in joint-venture universities may lead to 'brain gain' (Mok & Han, 2016) as students studying and staying after graduation in overseas countries can be ambassadors speaking for Chinese interests. Mok & Han's indication on increasing demand of Chinese students seeking transnational education is contrary to Zhuang & Tang's (2012) research, which claims that there is a declining trend of the demand for Sino-UK transnational education in China, due to demographic change in China, the increasing competition of transnational education, and the barriers of language and culture.

Mok & Han's (2016) study raises an interesting point that there are similarities between study abroad and study in joint-venture universities in China, as what Chinese students are looking for is world-class education and international competitiveness. Their study provides some evidences for the claim that the quality of joint-venture universities in China has been recognised by many students. Students choose joint-venture universities because of the relatively lower cost and the quality is similar to overseas institutions, therefore can help students enhance their global competitiveness. However, Mok & Han's study does not explore the quality assurance system of joint-venture universities in China, which leaves space for further studies.

The above review of existing literature on quality assurance of transnational education, and transnational education in China shows that most research emphasizes the importance of cultural context (Pyvis, 2011; Sharp, 2017). Other research either discusses quality assurance from the perspective of recognition of transnational educational qualifications, or approaches transnational education in China from the perspectives of social capital (Mok & Han, 2016) or marketing demands (Zhuang & Tang, 2012). Only Yang (2008) and Mok & Han (2008) mention the concern on quality assurance of transnational education in China.

With the increasing demand of transnational education from Chinese students, how to ensure the quality assurance of transnational education in China will be an urgent issue to be addressed. Building on the existing literature, further research can be conducted on why double degrees can attract students who are keen on pursuing high-quality world-class education, how the cultural and regulatory context influences the quality assurance system of importing institutions, and whether there are multiple institutional logics associated with the quality assurance system of joint-venture university awarding double degrees.

## **2.2 Theoretical Frameworks**

Friedland & Alfred (1991) argue that the notion of an institutional logic provides a framework to help understand the responses of organisations and individuals. The framework takes considerations of internal and external influences on an organisation, which provides a means for deeper understanding of strategies and actions taken by the organisation. By employing the theoretical framework of multiple institutional logics to examine the process of integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems in a joint-venture university in China, my research aims to unveil the strategies XJTLU has adopted in order to respond to multiple institutional logics that may be associated with Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. This study is grounded in two fundamental theoretical frameworks: multiple institutional logics and organisational response. These two theoretical streams are rooted in institutionalism and organisation. Therefore, a review of literature related to institutional theory, multiple institutional logics and organisational response is presented in the following sections, with clear definitions to these key terms.

### **2.2.1 Institutional Theory**

Institutional theory has become a popular and powerful theory for organisational studies. It synthesizes the approaches and theories of other disciplines such as management, economics, sociology and social psychology. The scope of

institutional theory has been expanded to diverse social issues and trends, definitions and systems of technology (Scott, 1998). According to Das (2016), organisation is defined as an entity linked with external environment, and consists of a group of people that have collective goal. Institutionalists primarily focus on analysis of the organisation as a unit, later institutional theory has been applied to a wider scope including components of organisations such as individuals and groups of individuals, as well as fields which are constituted by many organisations. Greenwood et al. (2008) review organisational institutionalism and indicate that most institutionalists' work is from the sociological institutional perspective and there are four main themes of institutional theory: legitimacy, isomorphism, institutional logics and organisational fields. Greenwood et al. (2008) also review the dynamics of institutional theory, which focuses on the role of power, institutional entrepreneurship, and the micro processes of institutional construction. In the following section, a brief review of the main themes of institutional theory is presented to lay a foundation for the theoretical framework.

The concept of institutional logic is developed by Friedland & Alfred (1991) when they conceptualize western society from the perspectives of 'capitalist market, bureaucratic state, democracy, nuclear family and Christian religion' (p. 232). They suggest that through institutional logic, practices and structures become tangible. Greenwood et al. (2011) further interpret Friedland and Alfred's account of institutional logic by stating that 'multiple institutional logics are available and can interact and compete for influence in all societal domains', and 'logics are often in conflict' (p. 321). Thornton & Ocasio (2008) define institutional logics as 'socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumption, values, beliefs and rules by which individual produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organise time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality' (p.101). Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury's (2012) seminal work on institutional logics sees institutional logics a way to 'posit an exterior culture manifest in materialised practices and cultural vocabularies of practice' (p. 43). Their work

lays out a complete inter-institutional system of profession, corporation and community, and specifies the building blocks of the institutional logics, including mechanisms such as sources of legitimacy, authority and identity, bases of norms, attention and strategy. They claim that these building blocks are the organising principles that shape individual and organisational preferences and interests.

The definition of multiple institutional logics will be elaborated in the next section. Institutional logics have become a much researched area over the past two decades and it still attracts the interest of institutionalists. Because a country's quality assurance system is associated with specific values and rules, which may have influences on social actors. Therefore, institutional logic is the key concept to be applied to this case study. More focus will be given to institutional logic than other themes of institutional theory. Most works on institutional logics focus on 'how institutions, through their underlying actions, shape heterogeneity, stability and change in individuals and organisation' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 103). Greenwood et al. (2011) examine strategies and structures organisation deploy to cope with multiple institutional logics and develop an analytical framework guide further work on institutional complexity.

The organisational field is another key theme in institutional theory, because the organisational field shapes the nature of institutional complexity faced by organisations. The term 'organisational field' is firstly introduced by Warren (1967), who studied the organisational response to the environment and organisational behaviour, based on which Scott (1995) further expanded the organisational field concept to the study of creation and dissemination of institutional logics. Later, organisational field is defined by Hoffman as 'a community of organisations that partake of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than actors outside the field' (1999, p. 352). Organisational field plays as a central role in institutional theory, as it connects organisations with the institutional process.

The other two themes in institutional theory are legitimacy and isomorphism. Suchman (1995) describes legitimacy as the ‘generalized perception that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions. (p. 574)’. Dacin, Goodstein & Scott (2002) consider legitimacy as a condition in which other alternatives are seen as less appropriate, desirable, or viable. They describe legitimacy from normative, regulatory and cognitive perspectives. According to them, a new practice can be legitimate when it is consistent with wider social values, existing rules and laws support the new practice and it is connected to wider belief systems of the institutional environment. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) define isomorphism as the process in which organisations become appear similar or dissimilar, because of the organisations’ practice embodied similar social norms and values and are operating under similar conditions. As my study will focus on multiple institutional logics and organisational response, legitimacy and isomorphism are less relevant to my study.

Institutional theory provides a good foundation for research in organisational behaviour. It has been applied to various theoretical themes and analytical perspectives, and to research of higher education (Dune & Jones, 2010; Thornton, 2002; Thornton, Jones & Kury, 2005; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012). However, a search of the terms of ‘institutional theory’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘institutional logic’ and ‘transnational higher education’ in the Social Sciences Citation Index and EBSCO of the University of Liverpool’s online library led to the identification of only a few studies which examine transnational higher education through the lens of institutional theory. For example, Wilkins & Huisman (2012) use the institutional theory to analyse the motives for starting an international branch campus. They indicate that the institutional difference, which refers to the differences between the regulatory, normative and cultural institutional environments, influences the motives and strategies of starting



transnational higher education in another country. They also claim that although the institutional differences between China and major exporting countries are high, the existence of clear regulatory framework for transnational education helps avoid risks of setting up international branch campus in China. The other studies found are less relevant to institutional theory.

Although institutional theory is considered a powerful theoretical framework for analysis of individual and organisational actions, it has also received criticism for having not paid enough attention to how institutions are formed (Phillips & Malhotra, 2008). Phillips & Malhotra (2008) point out ‘In the past couple of decades, institutional theory has predominantly provided insights into process that explain institutional stability rather than change... There has been little attention toward unpacking process of how institutions are created and existing one changed.’ (Phillips & Malhotra, 2008, p. 714). This issue has been later resolved by Scott (2008), who maintains that institutions are created in two ways, one is an evolutionary process, and another is a process directed by intention and power. Institutional theory provides an analytic framework to study XJTLU, because as a new institution of transnational education in China, the creation and evolution of institutions may be manifested in its practice and it might be easier to track the process through data collection.

### **2.2.2 Multiple Institutional Logics**

Greenwood et al. (2011) describe institutional complexity as a phenomenon that occurs when organisations confront different prescriptions from multiple institutional logics. They describe institutional logics as the overarching principles that prescribe ‘how to interpret organisational reality, what constitutes appropriate behaviour and how to succeed’ (p.318). They indicate that when the prescriptions and proscriptions of different logics are incompatible, challenges or tensions are generated for the organisation. Researchers traditionally view institutional complexity as a stage of development because it could generate conflicts and drive

for changes (Hensmans, 2003). Helms et al. (2012) claim that institutional complexity can be a process in which different logics reach an agreement and a hierarchy of logics is established to allow co-existence of multiple institutional logics. Voronov et al. (2013) acknowledge that ‘institutional complexity can be seen as a resource and source of opportunities’ rather than ‘purely as a problem to overcome’ (p.1565).

Studies of multiple institutional logics focus on different fields such as social enterprise (Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011), health care (Dunn & Jones, 2010), professional services (Cooper, Hinings, Greenwood, & Brown, 1996; Lounsbury, 2002), and higher education (Thornton, Jones, & Kury, 2005). Scholars also look into the consequences of multiple logics. Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis’ (2011) study on social sector in the UK demonstrates that new organisational form can be created through combination of contradictory logics and that the new hybrid logic may lead to organisational demise. However, Jay (2012) proposes that multiple logics make organisations more sustainable.

Divergent lenses have been used in studying multiple institutional logics. Battilana & Dorado’s (2010) study focuses on new types of hybrid organisations that combine multiple institutional logics in unprecedented ways. The study explores how new types of hybrid organisations handle tensions between logics, and proposes that a common organisational identity to keep a balance between the multiple logics should be developed. The study also suggests that a tabula rasa hiring approach would help facilitate the identity building, and an end-focused socialisation strategy could be used to reinforce desired behaviour and values.

Although Battilana & Dorado’s (2010) study focuses on organisational and intra-organisational level analysis, an individual actor’s existing job experience and values may also influence the interaction of multiple logics (Adkins, 1995). McPherson & Sauder’s (2013) research addresses the gap by focusing on

individual actors. The study examines how professionals with different logics use their logics to negotiate decisions in a drug court. They propose that local actors can use logics to break the procedural and definitional limits to reach consensus and manage institutional complexity. Binder's (2007) study pays attention to inter-unit analysis in which he explores how different organisational units in one organisation respond to multiple institutional logics in different ways.

The studies discussed above have examined multiple institutional logics from different levels. However, none of them analyses multiple institutional logics from both organisational and individual levels. Glynn (2000) points out that institutional logic is enacted by organisation members, so in order to develop deeper understanding of how organisations respond to multiple logics, both the organisation and the individual should be considered.

To understand the key concepts of institutional complexity and organisational responses, Greenwood et al.'s (2011) give a full examination of studies related to multiple institutional logics, and addresses how multiple institutional logics are refracted in field structures and process, and are experienced by organisations and how organisations respond to multiple logics. Through an analytical framework for varied responses to multiple institutional logics, they give their definition of institutional complexity and propose how field-level mechanisms shape and process institutional complexity and why organisations respond differently to field-level pressures. Their work provides some key concepts for multiple institutional logics, such as relationship between logics, structure, ownership and governance, and identity. The following section will give an overview of these concepts.

Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that the pattern of relationships between logics is important for institutional research. They point out that many studies (Thornton, 2002; Edwards & Delbridge, 2011; Reay & Hinings, 2005) describe the

relationship between two institutional logics as incompatible, using words such as contested, conflicting and competing. For example, Thornton (2002) notes that the editorial logic and market logic are competing, and Edwards & Delbridge (2011) describe that the professional logic and market logic are contradictory and interdependent. In their research, the differences between logics are described through their 'implications for roles, skills and competence, practice, protocols, performance criteria, and so forth' (Greenwood et al., 2011, p. 332).

However, multiple institutional logics do not always compete with each other. For instance, Greenwood et al. (2011) note that 'logics may reinforce each other' (p. 332). Upton & Warshaw (2017) claim that logics can be combined, which are also called hybrid logics. In their study on multiple institutional logics in US public research university, they observe that hybrid logics which combines social institution and industry logics are at play in some US public research universities. To give a more specific description of the incompatibility of logics, their differences in goals and means can be explored (Pache & Santos, 2010). Greenwood et al. (2010) point out that most existing research focuses on two competing logics and suggest that future research could consider organisations in which more than two competing logics are found.

Actors are carriers who influence organisational decisions through their interpretation of priorities and preferable outcomes (Chung & Luo, 2008; Ocasio, 1999). Pache & Santos (2010) propose that actors in an organisation represents and gives voice to institutional logics. Actors with different structural positions interpret, give meaning and represent their own beliefs and normative criteria. Greenwood et al. (2011) point out that actors represent and import their primarily exposed meanings and norms of logics to an organisation, and influence the organisation's response to multiple organisational logics. Organisational structure shapes how organisations experience the complexity caused by multiple institutional logics, and determines the repertoire of organisational response

(Greenwood et al., 2011). Greenwood et al.'s (2011) account on structure maintains that field-level logic's influence on organisations is through the organisation members' link with the field. They claim that the level of influence of field-level logics varies for different units within an organisation. To reduce the level of institutional complexity and field-level logics' influence on organisation, some large organisations tend to detach their members from the wider professional context. They suggest that future research on structure may explore 'the nature of the communities inhabiting organisations and the nature of their ties to field-level equivalents' (Greenwood et al., 2011, p. 344).

According to Greenwood et al. (2011), organisational decisions are not only influenced by actors, but also influenced by those with power. They observe that those with power 'are likely to determine organisational responses to multiple institutional logics and... appreciation and recognition of logics, and the choice of which logics to prioritise and how to do so, will be dictated by those with power' (p. 344). Nite et al.'s (2012) research echoes this issue of power by claiming that leadership can influence the prioritisation of two completing institutional logics. Greenwood et al. (2011) identify two approaches to the relationship between power and institutional complexity. One is ownership and another is governance. They claim that the composition of ownership 'shapes the relative receptivity of organisations to multiple logics' (p. 344) was based on Goodrick & Salancik's (1996) analysis on different responses to the use of caesarean operations in public and private hospitals. Ownership in Greenwood et al.'s (2011) account does not only mean the ownership of organisation, it is a more general concept including boards of directors and partnership, who also participate in the decision processes. Greenwood et al. (2011) has observed that another approach exists to the relationship between power and institutional complexity, which is the governance role of different positions and groups. In summary, power affects which logics will receive more attention and is more easily accepted by organisations.

### **2.2.3 Multiple Institutional Logics in Higher Education**

Although multiple institutional logics have been widely applied to different fields such as public sector, health care, financial sector and corporation, the number of studies employing multiple institutional logics to higher education is relatively small.

Thornton's (2004) research on higher education publishing in U.S. explores the shift from editorial to market logic of higher education publishing. The research analysed the form of capitalism, organisational identity, legitimacy, authority structure in relation to the editorial and market logic, and claims that the shift from an editorial to a market logic has a moderating effect on the adoption of new forms of organisational structure. Thornton's (2004) work shows that there is potential for application of multiple institutional logics to higher education. However, only in recent years, can more literature be found on multiple institutional logics of higher education.

Most research into multiple institutional logics in higher education discuss competing multiple institutional logics and how the organisation responds to competing logics. For example, Nite et al. (2012) conduct a case study on how a faith-based university addresses competing logics between the mission of religion and the demand of intercollegiate athletics. The study examines the strategies adopted by the university to manage an athletic department. Through collecting data from internal documents and interviews with university administrators and faculty, they identified effective strategies for resolving conflicting logics within the athletic department, which include leadership's oversight of the athletic department to prioritise the logics, and strong cultural buy-in regarding religious traditions by the athletic administrators and coaches. Nite et al.'s (2012) study also points out that effective management of competing institutional logics should not categorize multiple logics into good or bad, and an organisation's members' benefits should also be considered when prioritising multiple institutional logics.

Competing logics may lead to hybrid logic which combines the demands of multiple logics. Upton & Warshaw's (2017) research observes that public research universities in US have hybrid logics of industry and social institution. According to them, industry logic in public research university refers to values and beliefs that originated from market demands and economic development, whilst social institution logic draws from social goals and academic ideals. They examine the key mission and planning documents of three U.S. research universities over a fifteen-year period, with the aim to analyse the underlying principles and values reflecting the industry logic and the social institution logic. Their finding suggests that the universities have adopted multiple strategies to respond to the demands of the competing industry and social institution logics and the most interesting response of the university is to hybridise the industry and social institution logics to create a new form. Upton & Warshaw's (2017) research on hybrid logics provides a framework for understanding how universities manage multiple institutional logics. However, further research on how completing logics are aligned for mutual benefits may provide an effective tool for university's response to multiple institutional logics.

The above literature provides examples of how multiple institutional logics are managed in higher education context. However, these studies mostly focus on field level logics, for example, market logic (Thornton, 2004), social institution logic (Upton & Warshaw, 2017), state logic (Brown, 2017), and only discuss completing institutional logics in higher education. More attention needs to be paid to micro-organisational institutional logics, and how multiple institutional logics interact differently in various scenarios.

#### **2.2.4 Organisational Response to Multiple Institutional Logics**

Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that existing studies on organisational response to institutional complexity focus on two areas: organisational strategies and organisational structure. Organisational strategies refer to the strategies adopted

by organisations to deal with multiple institutional logics. Structure focuses on how multiple institutional logics are reflected in the organisation's structure and practices. In order to award double degrees, XJTLU has to respond to multiple demands that may be associated with Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, and specific strategies and structure changes may be adopted by the university. Therefore, the lines of Greenwood et al.'s (2011) analysis provide useful theoretical framework to address the research questions of this study.

By reviewing studies on why organisations adopt a particular strategy to respond to competing logics, Greenwood et al. (2011) summarize four perspectives: organisational representation and voice (Pache & Santos, 2010; Heimer, 1999), intra-organisational power (Oliver, 1991), organisational identity (Kraatz & Block, 2008; Glynn, 2008) and decoupling (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008). Drawing on the studies of Greenwood et al. (2011), Battilana & Dorado's (2010), and Bevirt & Suddaby (2016), my research will focus on organisational responses in terms of structural change, organisational identity and identity scripts.

Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that multiple institutional logics 'are reflected in in the organisations' structures and practice' (p. 351). Therefore, examination of structural change can be used as an approach to study the organisation's response to multiple institutional logics. Two types of structures have been noted from the literature: blended hybrid and structural differentiation. Blended hybrid means integrating structure and practices of different logics into a single organisation (Binder, 2007; Chen & O'Mahoney, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2011). Structural differentiated hybrid refers to different subunits of an organisation dealing with particular logics, which eventually instil different mind-sets, practices and processes to different parts of the organisation (Anand, Gardner & Morris, 2007). Greenwood et al. (2011) note that organisations such as universities and hospitals tend to have a hybrid structure as they need to blend professional and commercial logics.



The organisational identity perspective emphasizes that ‘features of the organisation are important influences upon the blending of logics’ (Greenwood et al., 2011, p. 361). Organisational identity refers to how one organisation is different from other organisations. Dutton, Roberts & Bednar (2009) emphasize that enough attention should be paid to how identity is perceived by organisational actors. Battilana & Dorado’s (2010) study on the process of two banks creating new organisations provides a good example of how blended hybrids are achieved. Their study compares the strategies adopted by two banks in order to create new organisations. They find out that although both of the new organisations needed to draw practices from different logics, only one succeeded because it developed a common organisational identity to maintain the balance between logics. This identity formation involved a particular human resources practice, which is not to hire employees with prior experience in logic, because it is difficult for individuals with any previous attachment to the old logic to work in new ways. Therefore, the important role of human resources is highlighted (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Kang & Snell, 2009).

Bringing individuals back to institutional research is an emerging new trend of organisational studies. Individuals are carriers of institutional logics. Their beliefs, values and behaviours reflect organisation settings and broader social reality. Bevoort & Suddaby (2016) indicate that an individual’s development of a shared identity can also help the organisation to enact institutional pressure. They conduct a study on how individuals make sense of contradictory institutional logics through identity scripts, which is defined by Barley & Tolbert (1997) as ‘observable, recurrent activities, and patterns of interaction characteristic of a particular setting’ (p. 98). They claim that identity and identity work provide major tools for understanding how micro-individual interpretations of institutional logics and institutional work of reinterpreting multiple logics is based on individual cognition and interpretive subjectivity.

### **2.3 Summary**

The purpose of this study is to understand how a joint-venture university in China may respond to multiple institutional logics that may be associated with Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. The study is conducted based on a number of theoretical concepts including institutional theory, multiple institutional logics that may be associated with assurance system of transnational education, and organisational response.

There has been increasing number of studies conducted on multiple institutional logics. These studies engage qualitative or quantitative approaches to study multiple institutional logics in various empirical settings such as health care (Kitchener, 2002; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Andersson & Liff, 2018), manufacturing sector (Greenwood, et al., 2010), financial sectors (Lounsbury, 2007; Bevirt & Suddaby, 2016), and public service sector (Vickers et al., 2017). Whilst examinations of multiple institutional logics and organisational responses are well established within institutional theory, few of these studies explore organisational responses to multiple institutional logics that may be associated with transnational higher education.

Research on the quality assurance of transnational education is also increasing (Ziguras & Mc Burnie, 2008; Nhan & Nguyen, 2018; Smith, 2010; and Sharp, 2018). However, most research on quality assurance systems in transnational education either focus on cultural context, quality agency, or recognition of transnational qualifications. Literature on the quality assurance of transnational education in China is scarce and no research can be found applying the multiple institutional logics concept to quality assurance of transnational education.

The review of existing literature on quality assurance of transnational education, multiple institutional logics and organisational response helps identify gap in

current research, and provides the theoretical basis for my research. Through applying conceptions of multiple institutional logics and organisational response to quality assurance of transnational education in China, deeper understanding on how XJTLU that may respond to multiple institutional logics may be associated with its quality assurance system could be developed.

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the rationales for the choice of research methodology and introduces details about the research aim and research questions, research paradigm, research design, data collection and analysis. The chapter also discusses the validity, reliability and ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.1 Research Aim and Questions**

Transnational education has become increasingly popular among Chinese students in recent years. Since China opened up its educational market in 2003, legislation has been made on the development of Sino-foreign collaborative universities. Independent joint-venture universities as the major format of Sino-foreign collaborative universities have seen fast development over the past decades. Established with collaboration between Chinese and foreign universities, independent joint-venture universities are receiving more attention and have developed a positive reputation in the Chinese higher education sector. The quality of programmes delivered by joint-venture universities in China has been recognized by many students.

Although much research has been conducted on quality assurance of transnational education, many studies focus on quality assurance in specific subject areas or the role of quality assurance agencies. As indicated in the literature review chapter, quality assurance of transnational higher education in China is understudied. Yang's (2008) research on transnational education in China only gives a light mention of quality assurance, calling for more government intervention after approving transnational education programmes. Joint-venture universities awarding double degrees are required to comply with demands of Chinese and foreign quality assurance systems. Therefore, these universities may face multiple institutional logics associated with different quality assurance systems. Research on quality assurance of transnational education in China from the perspective of multiple institutional logics is expected to open new research directions for the

quality assurance system of transnational education in China, and address the gap of existing literature.

The aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how quality assurance systems work at joint-venture universities in China. In particular, the study aims to find out how intuitional logics may be associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, and how staff's prior background and experiences may influence the quality assurance practice at XJTLU, and how XJTLU may respond to the demand of possible multiple institutional logics. The Chinese and UK quality assurance systems are associated with different values, rules and practices and may represent different logics. In order to find out how these multiple logics may interact with each other within XJTLU, what actions the university may have taken as response to possible multiple institutional logics, the following research questions have been established:

1. To what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and, if so, how do they interact with each other?
2. How has XJTLU responded to multiple intuitional logics if they are evident?

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm is defined by Guba & Lincoln (1994) as the worldview and beliefs that guide a research. This research is rooted in social constructivism. Constructivism views learning as a process of constructing meaning from previous experience. A number of perspectives are related to constructivism with different focuses on the process of knowledge construction: some focus on the role of experience and others on the social and individual nature of meaning-making process (Merriam et al., 2007). There are two main strands of constructivism: personal and social constructivism (Driver, Asoko, Leach, Mortimer, & Scott, 1994 in Merriam et al., 2007). Personal constructivism posits learning as a meaning making process in which one learn based on previous and current

knowledge structures, while social constructivist believes knowledge is constructed through social exchange. Self-directed learning, experiential learning and reflective practice all incorporate elements of constructivism. O'Connor (1998) claims that the process of knowing is the process of developing higher levels of reasoning and learning through social interaction. Derry (1999) points out that knowledge is constructed through understanding the culture and context.

Pache & Santos (2010) claim that institutional logics are socially constructed patterns of assumptions, values and beliefs. They also propose that institutional logics are interpreted and presented by actors. The investigation of multiple institutional logics may be associated with the quality assurance practice at XJTLU needs to consider the cultural and contextual setting of the organisation, in order to develop understanding of how the organisation responds to multiple institutional logics. The research process is the social interaction with various members of the organisation, who have divergent cultural and contextual background. From cultural dimensions, the values and rules of two countries' quality assurance systems represent different cultural philosophies and have different influences on roles of actors. On the practical dimension, developing and implementing quality assurance systems are about creating quality standards and ensuring actors have similar understanding and expectations. Therefore, social constructivism is suitable to explore my research questions.

The epistemological ground of a research guides the choice of relevant research approach. Crotty (1998) points out that epistemology explains how we know what we know and the process in which knowledge is produced. Social constructivism believes that knowledge is not created or discovered, it is constructed through social interaction. One of the research questions of this study is, to what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU? I hypothesize that there might be multiple institutional logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems before the start of the research.

However, I realise that no definite answers can be given at that stage because only after investigation of the hypothesis through data collection and analysis can help develop understanding of the research questions.

Given the social constructivist positioning of the research, an interpretive approach is suited for my research questions. The interpretive approach is based on the concept that 'reality is understood to be socially situated and the investigator and the participant to be engaged in a mutual process of constituting knowledge' (Jacobson et al., 2007). Merriam (2002) claims that an interpretive researcher interprets phenomena of their researched area with the aim to understand the phenomena, the process and the beliefs of people in order to figure out patterns and themes. Investigations of interpretive research are interactive and flexible. Unlike quantitative research, in which the research process is a standardized procedure and investigators are detached from research settings to ensure reliability and validity. Interpretive research processes are collaborative, during which researchers immerse in the participants' worlds to seek understanding of participants' perspectives (Jacobson et al., 2007). Participants' perspectives are particularly important for investigation of institutional logics, because as Hallett (2010) indicates, institutional logic is inhabited with people in 'their work activities, social interactions, and meaning-making process' (p.53). Participants' perspectives are also important for this research, as participants' understanding of quality assurance may be not only influenced simply by the logics of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, but also by the values and beliefs associated with their prior background and experiences.

Although the interpretive approach provides an interactive and flexible way to study the research questions, the validity of interpretive research is often challenged by quantitative researchers. A risk of interpretive approach is that the researcher may inject subjective interpretations of the phenomena with prior knowledge. To reduce subjectivity, as Radnor (2001) suggests, the researcher must

be proactively reflexive during data analysis. Brannick & Coghlan (2007) explore the challenges for insider researcher in areas such as access, preunderstanding, role duality and organisational politics, and argue that insider research is valid and provides important knowledge about what the organisation is really like which may not be uncovered by traditional research. They also suggest that insider researchers should be reflexive and avoid using their preunderstanding to approach research questions. They also advise that insider researchers should separate the roles as researcher and organisational member and pay attention to organisational politics. Following Brannick & Coghlan's (2007) advice, I pay special attention to avoid bringing my prior understanding or judgements of quality assurance system into the study. Costa & Kallick (1993) point out that critical friends can offer helpful critiques because they understand the context of the work presented and the person's desired outcomes. In order to avoid biases and get critiques on my research, I have chosen a colleague who is a researcher in education and management as a critical friend. I talked to him about the research process and initial findings to get his critiques. He has offered valuable judgements on my research and given me some constructive advices, which helped me to avoid possible bias as an insider researcher.

### **3.3 Research Method**

To address the research questions, a single case study has been selected as an appropriate research method for this study. This section explains in detail why a single case study has been considered a suitable method and how the case is selected.

Yin (2018) claims that the choice of research method depends on the research questions. Farquhar (2012) suggests that case studies are normally used to answer questions starting with 'who', 'how' and 'why'. As Farquhar (2012) quoting Yin (2011), 'case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the



boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (2012, p. 5). Case study is 'a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context. The aim is to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied... Case study is particularly suited to research questions which require a detailed understanding of social or organisational processes because of the rich data collected in context' (Hartley, 2004, p. 323).

Ridder (2017) describes the theoretical contribution of four different case study designs. According to Ridder (2017) the social construction of reality case study design proposed by Stake (2005) and 'no theory first' case study design proposed by Eisenhardt (1989) both focus on new or interesting phenomenon with no theory. The research strategies of these two approaches are different. Social construction design's research strategy is the observation and description of the case, whereas the strategy of 'no theory first' case study is either constructivist or positivist, using research methods of interviews, documents and observations. The case study proposed by Yin (2014) focuses on a phenomenon that is partially understood with tentative theory. The strategy of Yin's (2014) case study design is pattern-matching and searching for mechanisms, using research methods such as interviews, documents and observations. The final case study design is anomalies (Gilbert & Christensen, 2005), which focuses on a phenomenon that is understood with extended theory. The strategy is identifying anomalies as failures of existing theory or reconstructing theory. The research method of anomalies case study design includes observations, interviews, and dialogue of observer and participants.

The aim of this research is to study how an organisation responds to potential multiple institutional logics may be associated with different quality assurance systems during the process of establishing the quality assurance system at a transnational education institution in China. The research is carried out within the

theoretical concepts of institutional logics and organisational response. In particular, the study explores whether multiple institutional logics are evident in quality assurance practices of transnational education in China, how they interact with each other, what the key events or changes are that may be caused by the coexistence of multiple logics, and how the organisation responds to the multiple institutional logics. As indicated in the literature review, the concept of multiple institutional logics has been applied to higher education by a few studies previously, but it has not been used for studying the quality assurance in transnational education in China before. Therefore, Yin's (2014) case study design is more appropriate for this research, which is normally used to study phenomenon partially understood by tentative theory, with the aim to search for patterns.

The study approaches the research questions using the theoretical concept of multiple institutional logics which is scarcely used in higher education. However, although multiple institutional logics are straightforward in concept, as suggests by Yin (2018), what kind of case is relevant becomes the initial question I need to consider. To study multiple institutional logics, an institution of transnational education in China that is facing demands from multiple values, beliefs and rules would seem to be an appropriate case. Among different types of transnational education in China, most are joint-venture programmes, which are dependent to public universities in China. Therefore, the quality assurance of these programmes is dominated by the Chinese quality assurance system. In contrast, independent joint-venture universities awarding double degrees may have to develop their own quality assurance systems to satisfy the quality assurance requirements of Chinese and foreign educational systems, which may be associated with multiple institutional logics. This consideration narrows the number of candidate cases to the four joint-venture universities awarding double degrees. The next step is to consider whether a single or multiple case studies is appropriate to this study.

Street and Ward's (2012) claim that case studies can be conducted on different

levels such as individual, group, and organisational levels. A case study can therefore be a single or multiple case study. Fiss (2009) indicates that a single case study has greater opportunities to disclose facts unknown to the outside world because it investigates the causes of a phenomenon more deeply. Vaughan (1992) points out that multiple case studies can reveal similarities and differences through cross-case analysis. The justification for selecting a single case study is based on two reasons. First, according to Yin (2018), a single case study can help understand the trends of the processes of a case in a period of time. The study is focused on changes and trends over time during the process of integrating Chinese and foreign quality assurance systems at one university; therefore, a single case is suitable for this study. Second, existing literature and published documents on the quality assurance systems of the four joint-venture universities in China varies. In order to conduct an in-depth case study, XJTLU is selected for the accessibility to documents and study participants.

In summary, a single case study is selected as an appropriate research method because it helps answer the research questions which mostly start with 'how'. In addition, according to Yin (2018), a single case study is also suitable to study an organisational process and help search for mechanisms, so it provides an important research tool to investigate the quality assurance system of transnational institutions and help identify strategies adopted by the organisation to respond to multiple institutional logics. The quality assurance system developed at XJTLU responds to requirements of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, and also provides rich data sources for the case study. As indicated by Yin (2008), case studies are especially useful at early stage of theory development, when key themes and categories are yet to be empirically isolated. Due to limited time for this research, the objective of this study is to produce new models for understanding phenomena, rather than create generalized empirical data.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Data for this case study of how an organisation responds to multiple institutional logics in the process of integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems in a university were collected from archival documents and individual interviews.

### ***3.4.1 Archival Documents***

Documents are considered to be a rich source of data (Punch 2005). Hodder (2000) describes the importance of documents for analysis and their particular value when they were clearly understood in their social contexts. Ridder (2017) claims that although documentary analysis is often considered as secondary research, analysis of documents is a common research method for case study. VanWynsberghe & Kahn (2007) indicate that interviews, participant observations and document analysis are well-known techniques for collecting data for case study. Literature review shows that the majority of research on institutional logics uses documents as data sources. For example, Reay & Hinings' (2009) study on rivalry of competing institutional logics of health care fields analyse archival documents related to government, physicians and Regional Health Authorities. Bevirt & Suddaby's (2016) account of how individuals make sense of contradictory instructional logics has reviewed archival data related to the research site.

Documentation is useful for collecting data because it is 'stable, unobtrusive, specific, and broad' (Yin, 2018, p. 114). According to Yin (2018), the strengths of documentation include that it can be reviewed repeatedly, contain the details of events and references, cover a long span of time, and many events and settings. In my research, the first question is to find out whether multiple institutional logics are manifested in the case's quality assurance practice. As documentation related to the quality assurance of the case can provide an authentic description of the quality assurance requirements related to Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, analysis of documentation may reflect the concepts, understandings, and attitudes of multiple logics in the case study. In addition, document analysis will also help identify key events of organisational changes. Identification of key

events is based on Morgeson, Mitchel & Liu's (2015) event system theory, which describes events in three key dimensions: novelty, disruption and criticality. According to them, the more novel, disruptive and critical an event, 'the more likely it will change or create behaviours, features and events' (p. 521).

The purpose of document analysis is to identify possible multiple institutional logics that may be associated with the quality assurance system at XJTLU, and to analyse the key themes may emerge from Chinese and UK quality assurance practices. Yin (2018) reminds researchers that documents are written for some specific purposes and reflect the views of the authors. Therefore, to understand the beliefs, values, and preferred behaviour patterns associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, reviewing the reports produced by the Chinese government, the University of Liverpool and XJTLU could provide rich textual contents. For this reason, the analysis included documents related to applications for the Chinese degree awarding power and new degree programmes, self-evaluation documents and action plans produced by XJTLU, and the reports of accreditation, reaccreditation and annual monitoring visits authored by the University of Liverpool.

To understand whether the policies and procedures of the quality assurance system at XJTLU is influenced by multiple institutional logics, documents related to the quality assurance policies and procedures have also been reviewed, because as indicated by Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012), institutional logics are material practices, assumptions and beliefs that shape cognition and behaviour. The study also refers to Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) publications and policies and regulations published on the Ministry of Education of China's website.

To have valid access to the above mentioned documents and ensure the reliability of my study, I wrote to the Head of Programme Management Quality Assurance

Office to get official approval for accessing relevant documents, which is stored in an online space. In the email, I explained the purpose and aim of the research, and ensured them that the documents would be used for my study only. I also got the approval to access the full folders relating to quality assurance, as these documents are not normally accessible by public, and have provided rich textual and contextual accounts for my research.

Systematic analysis of documents is conducted to determine the key events related to establishment of quality assurance system at XJTLU. I reviewed the annual self-evaluation documents and action plans produced by XJTLU chronologically from 2007 to 2016 to trace the indications of how quality assurance system was established and the key events or changes of establishing quality assurance system. To understand what actions have been taken by XJTLU in order to respond to possible multiple institutional logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, I categorized data by actors over time following Scott's (2001) suggestion that institutional logics guide the behaviour of actors, to track events to find out the correlation between key events and actions. The following table shows documentation list reviewed and analysed for this study.

***Table 2: Documentation List***

No.	Documentation Name	Author	Report Year
1	Temporary Regulation on Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions	MoE	1990
2	Report on the Accreditation Visit to Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU)	The University of Liverpool (UoL)	2007
3	XJTLU Quality Assurance Procedures	XJTLU	2007
4	Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degree	MoE	2004
5	Notice on Review of Degree Awarding Power Application	Jiangsu Department	2007

		of Education	
6	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit 2008	UoL	2008
7	Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Bachelor's Degree Awarding Power	Ministry of Education (MoE)	2008
8	Index System for Degree Programmes for Bachelor's Degree Awarding Power in Higher Education Institutions	MoE	2008
9	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit 2009	UoL	2009
10	National Subject Review of Social Science	MoE	2010
11	Briefing and Evaluation Document for XJTLU Reaccreditation for Undergraduate Provision and Accreditation for Taught Postgraduate Provision	XJTLU	2010
12	XJTLU Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures	XJTLU	2010
13	Report on XJTLU Reaccreditation for Undergraduate Provision and Accreditation for Taught Postgraduate Provision	UoL	2010
14	Application Forms for XJTLU Chinese Degree Awarding Power	XJTLU	2010
15	Degree Awarding Power Evaluation related Documents required by Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE)	MoE	2010
16	Briefing Statement for UoL Annual Monitoring Visit	XJTLU	2011
17	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit	UoL	2011
18	Regulation on Administration of Establishment of Undergraduate Programme by Institutions of Higher Education	MoE	2012
19	Briefing Statement for UoL Annual Monitoring Visit	XJTLU	2012
20	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit	UoL	2012
21	Briefing and Evaluation Document for UoL Annual Monitoring Visit	XJTLU	2013

22	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit	UoL	2013
23	XJTLU Self-evaluation Document for UoL Annual Monitoring Visit	XJTLU	2014
24	Combined Action Plan	XJTLU	2014
25	Report on XJTLU Annual Monitoring Visit	UoL	2014
26	Self-evaluation Document for UoL Reaccreditation	XJTLU	2015
27	Quality Assurance Systems and Processes	XJTLU	2015
28	XJTLU Reaccreditation Report	UoL	2015
29	XJTLU Summary of Achievements and Future Plan	XJTLU	2016
30	UoL Desk-based Monitoring Report	UoL	2016
31	XJTLU 2018-2028 Strategy	XJTLU	2017

### 3.4.2 Interviews

Although document is an important method to collect data for case study, document cannot be used as the only data source, Yin (2018) claims that document is usually used to corroborate evidence from other sources, and it has its own weakness as it may reflect bias of document author. In order to conduct a valid case study, other data collection method needs to be selected. Hammersley (2016) states that interview is typically used for data collection of qualitative research because it helps to gain the knowledge of organisational members, and to understand beliefs and attitudes of interviewees. Glynn (2000) proposes that organisational members enact institutional logics. Taking account of the need to understand how individual member may enact multiple institutional logics and get to know their beliefs and attitude toward the quality assurance system, interviews have been used to search for lived practices. The research used in-depth interviews as suggested by Patton (2002), interviews with open-ended questions help develop an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge.



Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) point out that interviews as a data collection method emphasize interactions, exchanges and negotiation of meaning between two parties. Arsel (2017) argues that interviews without a theoretical and methodological framework may cause more noise than data. In order to ensure interviews conducted for this research can collect informative and useful information for data analysis and developing findings, I planned the interviews in a careful and reflexive manner, and used my previous understanding and research questions to guide the design of interviews.

Alvesson (2003) claims that most interviews are performative and constructivist. Therefore, researchers should enter the interview well-prepared with research questions or a set of themes in order to open dialogues and new directions with participants. When designing the interviews, I followed the Four-step Iterative Guide for Interview design proposed by Arsel (2017). According to Arsel, the design of prescheduled and formal interview should have the following four steps: 1) Settle with an Epistemological Tradition, 2) Prepare an Interview Protocol, 3) Conduct the Interview, 4) Iterate. The following paragraphs will explain in details how I followed these four steps in my interviews.

Arsel (2017) emphasizes the importance of the epistemological position of interview design with the following statement:

‘While undoubtedly shaping the ways you approach your research question, design your study, and collect your data, a coherent epistemological position is even more important when it comes to analysing this interview data and making theoretical claims about the social world you are investigating.’  
(Arsel, 2017, p. 941)

Having a clear understanding of what I expect the interviews to reveal is important before the interviews. As stated in the Research Paradigm section, I approached

the research from a social constructivist lens. Therefore, the interviews conducted for this research were an epistemic practice in which, as Brinkmann (2007) suggests, both participant and interviewer need to contribute to the knowledge production.

Kvale (2006) points out that researchers should be mindful of the power relations between researchers and participants, as well as their bias and preconceptions, because although researchers have interview questions to guide the interviews, participants have control on what they want to say and how they want to say it. When selecting participants, special considerations have been given to possible influences of power relations on the conduct of interviews. To avoid the situation in which interviewees may feel stressful because of my role as the Head of President's Office, who is working closely with university leadership, I have clearly stated to them that the data collected from interview will be used in the research only and their names won't be shown in the research. I also avoided selecting interviewees who have direct or indirect reporting lines to me, because the power relations between supervisor and subordinator may influence the answers to interview questions.

Sandelowski (1995) claims that qualitative studies use a different approach to decide sample size and it is usually a subjective judgement. Bell (2010) suggests that interviews take time so researchers should select a representative sample for interviews. Due to time allowed for the research is quite limited, I followed Bell's (2010) suggestion and selected 12 participants for interviews. Most of them have been involved in the process of developing the quality assurance system at XJTLU. In order to collect data relevant to the research questions, the background and experiences of the participants were considered. The first research question focuses on the characteristics of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems and their interplay at XJTLU. Therefore, participants with direct experiences of both Chinese and UK higher education is preferred, especially those who have prior

experiences in different Chinese or UK universities. The second research question explores the actions taken to respond to multiple institutional logics, and also the rationale behind these actions, so interviews of participants in leadership roles who have decision making power is important.

Participants selected include former and current senior staff who have been involved in the decision making process of establishing the quality assurance system, middle managers who have participated in the quality assurance practice, faculty members who have chaired academic committees and implemented the code of practices of quality assurance, and professional service staff who supported the development and delivery of the quality assurance system at XJTLU. One third of the participants is of foreign nationalities. Although the participants have diverse background and positions, none of them have reporting responsibilities to me. Therefore, the possibility of power influence has been reduced and critical distance between participants and researcher was maintained. Nine interviews were conducted face to face and three interviews were conducted via Skype meetings. Rowley (2012) suggests that Skype interviews can be used to collect data if it is difficult to arrange face-to-face interviews. She indicates that although Skype interviews can save the travelling time, the richness of interaction may be lost. However, Bryman (2001) argues that Skype interviews may remove potential interviewer bias. For my research, 3 Skype interviews were arranged because the interviewees were located in other countries. Description of participants is listed in Table 3.

***Table 3: Description of Participants***

<b>Participant Code</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Chinese/International</b>
P1	Administrator in manager role	Chinese
P2	Academic faculty in leadership role	Chinese

P3	Administrator in manager role	International
P4	Administrator in manager role	Chinese
P5	Academic faculty in leadership role	Chinese
P6	Administrator	Chinese
P7	Academic faculty in leadership role	International
P8	Administrator in manager role	Chinese
P9	Academic faculty in leadership role	Chinese
P10	University senior leader	Chinese
P11	Academic faculty in leadership role	International
P12	University senior leader	International

The second step suggested by Arsel (2017) for conducting interviews is preparing an interview protocol. According to Arsel (2017), ‘An interview protocol is an outline of your interview, listing key points of exploration, provisional questions, and planned probes and transitions. Your protocol should incorporate three components. It should start with a brief introduction in lay terms, involving a description of the research project, an explanation of interview procedures, and an invitation to the participant to ask questions about the study and procedures.’ (p. 941). Based on this guideline, I gave a short introduction about my research before the start of each interview. The introduction included explanation of my research aim, research questions, methodology, data collection methods and interview procedures. In addition, I also explained to the participants why they were invited to the interviews. After the introduction, I invited participants to ask questions if they were unclear about the study or the interview procedures. To ensure the interview transcripts focus on the interview questions, the introduction was not recorded.

According to Arsel (2017), getting written consent before the interview is critical to the validity of the interview. In order to get consent from participants and ensure

that they participate in the research on voluntary basis, I wrote to each of the participants explained in details the background of my research, the methodology, the reason I have invited them to participate in the research and the voluntary nature of the interview. I attached the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to the email so that they understand the research better and know what to do if they determine later to withdraw from the interview. I also asked the participants' permission to record the interviews in the email. It is worth noting that one of the invited participants did not reply my email so invited another participant to the interview.

Rosenthal (2016) indicates that careful considerations should be given to data collection approach in order to collect the best information to answer the research questions. He points out that not only the design of research questions, the environment in which the interviews are conducted also affect data collection. During the interview process, to ensure the interviews were conducted in an environment in which participants feel comfortable with, most interviews took place in participants' offices. There were three exceptional cases that participants did not have their own offices, so these interviews were conducted in meeting rooms. The interviews were semi-structured, with some prepared questions followed by open-ended questions. The duration of each interview was from one to two hours.

McCarthy (2016) advises that researchers should be mindful to cultural and ethical issues during data collection, taking account of participants' cultural background, language proficiency, and level of confidence. In order to avoid bias caused by language use or misunderstanding, the interview language was determined by participants. They were asked to take the interview with the language they feel most comfortable and confident with. It is interesting to note that most Chinese participants prefer using Mandarin as the interview language. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to generate data. After each interview, thank-you

notes were sent to participants to thank them for sparing their time in the interviews.

Interview questions were framed around the research questions and key events identified from document analysis. Arsel points out that ‘research questions and interview questions are not the same thing, (2017, p. 943)’ because research questions abstract the relationships between concepts, and interview questions were designed to understand narratives of these concepts. The development of interview questions should make connections between the concepts and participant’s narratives. The key concepts in my research questions are logics, interactions and response, so I built the interview questions around these key concepts. The interview began with a question about participant’s role and their involvement in the quality assurance process. Then the participants were asked about their prior experiences of quality assurance before they joined XJTLU. A follow-up question is asked about their reflections on the differences of the two experiences related to quality assurance. Next, participants were asked to describe the key events or changes in quality assurance practices at XJTLU, and why and how they took place. The interviews also inquired into participants’ reflections on any tension or areas of uncertainty during the quality review of XJTLU. These interview questions provided rich contextual information about the process of developing the quality assurance system, because the data collected from interview reveals participants’ beliefs, values and perceptions towards the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and their understanding of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. Yin (2011) indicates that ‘self-reports and how they are worded may reveal extremely important insights into how the participants may be thinking about their own understanding of some behaviour’ (p. 132).

A useful method proposed in Arsel’s (2017) interview steps is beginning the interview with building rapport. Yin (2011) also indicates that maintaining good rapport with participant is important in order to warm up and get the conversations

going smoothly. There are different ways to build rapport with participants, in addition to introduction of the research and interview procedures. In my interviews, I followed the suggestion made by Arsel (2017). I told participants a bit about myself and why I was interested in the research project, because this would make participants feel relaxed. Although sharing personal story regarding the research project is useful to build a trustworthy relationship with participants, there is a fine line between adequate information and talking too much. According to Arsel (2017), telling participants the emergent findings from the research may shape participants' narrative as they may want to help the researcher, so it is best to avoid talking too much about the research findings.

In order to avoid giving too much information to frame participants' narratives, I tried to focus on the context of the key events rather than talking about my previous findings or key concepts. For example, when asking about participants' experiences of key events in developing quality assurance system at XJTLU, I asked them to describe any key events or key changes they could remember without giving them more hints. After their initial answers, I asked them follow-up questions such as why the key events have taken place and how they happened. In this way, participants could spontaneously figure out the context in which the key events had happened and their significance.

Rowley (2012) suggests that researchers should examine the interview questions carefully to avoid using jargons which may lead to misunderstanding by the participants. Because not all participants are heavily involved in the quality assurance process, I double checked my research questions to avoid using abbreviations of quality assurance processes and some academic committees, for example, 'ULTC' for 'University Learning and Teaching Committee', and 'AMV' for 'Annual Monitoring Visit'. During the interviews, if participants use abbreviation, I double checked with them the full spelling to ensure that the information is not misinterpreted.

Kvale & Brinkmann (2008) note that it is important to get the conversation going during interview, because interview is a conversation and participants may interpret the conversation using their previous background and experiences. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to adapt the questioning during the interview process. Following this advice, I paid special attention to the interview process, and tried to move on the interview gently and encourage the participants to elaborate their ideas if time allows.

The final step in Arsel's Four-step Iterative Guide for Interview Design is iterating. According to Arsel (2017), iterating is the step of reflecting on each interview, reviewing the narratives to find unexpected and contradictory information, and rethinking the questions and interpretation of the narratives. I find this step is particularly useful when I was conducting the interviews. When I was half-way through the interviews of the 12 participants, I found that the narrative of a participant was different from my previous assumption, which has reminded me to reflect on the data collected from archival document analysis, and to analyse the data from a different angle.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Following Braun & Clarke's (2006) suggestion that analysis of the entire data set can help search for meanings and patterns, I conducted data analysis of archival documents and interviewed 12 participants who had involved in the development of the quality assurance system at XJTLU.

The document data covers the time period from 2007 to 2016. The interview data is collected from interviews with 12 participants and most of them were involved in the development of the quality assurance system at XJTLU. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed by a third-party transcription service. Azevedo et al. (2017) points out that good review to check accuracy of the transcription is



important. The review should involve the interviewer, in addition to the transcriber. To ensure the reliability and accuracy of the transcription, the interview transcriptions were checked against the audio recording and the interview notes I took during the interviews.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic approach widely used in psychology and education. It offers an easily accessible approach to qualitative data, which does not require as much theoretical and technological knowledge as other methods do. It is useful for early career researchers who could gradually develop skills and confidence for evaluating, comparing and synthesizing other researchers' work on relevant topics (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through the thematic analysis process, researchers can generate themes underpinning assumptions and make sense of the studies of other researchers. I followed the 6 phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) for my data analysis. Detailed steps are explained in the next section.

It is recognized that thematic analysis may have some disadvantages as a research method. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the flexibility allowed by thematic analysis may result in broad interpretation of data, which will make it difficult to higher-phase analysis. Schrier (2012) also suggests that the validity of thematic analysis needs to be assessed by examining results of pilot coding. In addition, compared to other qualitative methods, thematic analysis could not provide adequate details for more sophisticated analysis.

### ***3.5.1 Thematic analysis of data***

Analysing data for patterns or themes could be done through multiple approaches (Rapley, 2011). Braun & Clarke (2006) propose six phases of thematic analysis for analysing qualitative data and it is an ideal method to identify, analyse, and report patterns within data. The objective of my study is to understand the

institutional logics associated with XJTLU's quality assurance practice and how XJTLU responds to multiple logics. Thematic analysis can help identify recurring expressions relating to the characteristics of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems and help analyse institutional logics may be associated with the systems. Therefore, it is best suited to the data and research questions.

The data analysis of this research followed the six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). During the data analysis, I firstly made myself familiar with the data set through reading and rereading the data to note down initial ideas. When I read the data set, I noted that three key actors were repeatedly mentioned by archival documents and interview transcription, which were China Ministry of Education, the University of Liverpool and XJTLU, so I made notes of the statements or activities related to these three groups of actors. I then repeated the next four phases of thematic data analysis including generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming the themes. In the end, I produced the report based on the data analysis.

During the data analysis, the whole data set was coded based on three key groups of actors, China Ministry of Education, the University of Liverpool and XJTLU. The codes were then grouped according to the objective, strategy, review method, review criteria, outcomes, data focus and behavior pattern of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. The main purpose of the coding was to search for events, statements and activities related the quality assurance requirements or practices of the group of actors. The first round of coding resulted in 24 codes. When the codes were listed, they were reviewed carefully to deduct duplicating codes and irrelevant codes. The total codes were then reduced to 14 codes. In order to facilitate sorting different codes into themes, I put all the codes into two tables. The codes were then analyzed to search for themes.

As indicated in literature review chapter, review of existing literature showed that

the Chinese quality assurance system and UK quality assurance system support different institutional logics. Through repeated reading of the data set, it was identified that documents produced by the University of Liverpool and QAA focused on institution's ability to establish the quality assurance process, implement quality assurance procedures and monitor and oversee the quality assurance process. The documents related to Ministry of Education emphasized meeting government requirements and mapping to quality standards defined by the government. After sorting different codes into sub-category themes, the main category themes were decided and they were made sense of their significance. Drawing on existing literature and the main themes of the data, the logic of UK quality assurance system was named as self-regulation, and Chinese quality assurance system was named as government-driven.

In order to understand possible strategies adopted by XJTLU to respond to multiple institutional logics, analysis of the interactions of multiple institutional logics has been conducted. The whole data set was analysed systematically to determine the statement, actions and responses to key quality assurance process during the development of the quality assurance system at XJTLU. The data is complemented by interviews of individuals involved in the process of developing the quality assurance system at XJTLU, to assist second-level coding. Based on the framework of types of logic multiplicity within organisations (Besharov & Smith, 2014), the study examines the patterns or strategies of responding to multiple institutional logics. The central analytics strategy used to address the research questions is to examine the interactions between the types of multiple institutional logics and the type of actions or behaviours taken. The analysis enabled me to gain an understanding of how XJTLU responded to multiple logics. After the key actions and behaviours were tracked down and coded, the list of themes was grouped, analysed and named.

In the thematic analysis, theoretical approach had been applied. The data coding

drew on Wang's (2014) catalogue of Chinese higher education quality assurance review, and literature related to comparative studies of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems to identify themes.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are key issues for case study research, as they provide confidence in data collection and also impact the use of research results in real practice (Riege, 2003). Although Rust & Cooil (1994) have analysed the reliability approaches for qualitative data, there were no specific criteria to measure the degree of validity and reliability in case study research. Yin (2009) adapts the construct validity, internal validity and reliability used in natural science research to address this gap. Based on the review of literature on how to enhance the quality of case study research, Riege (2003) proposed several techniques to guide researchers on how to establish validity and reliability in each phase of their research. The following sections present how validity and reliability issues were addressed in this research.

#### **3.6.1 Validity**

Yin (2011) claims that the validity of a study and its findings is a quality control issue. He indicates that a valid 'study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data' (p. 78). Maxwell refers to validity as 'the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account' (1996, p. 87). Through compiling and summarizing his own work and other studies, Maxwell proposes seven strategies for addressing the issue of validity. Based on the techniques proposed by Riege (2003) and Maxwell's (2009) strategies, I went through the following steps to ensure the validity of my research.

Triangulation in research refers to the principle of applying at least three ways of 'verifying or corroborating a particular event, description, or fact being reported by a study' (Yin, 2011, p. 81). Triangulation in the research process can increase

confidence of the researcher in reporting the study and help against researcher's bias (Yin, 2011; Reige, 2003). Onwuegbuzie (2005) points out that in qualitative research, triangulation occurs when researchers 'seek convergence and corroboration of results from different methods' (p. 384). For my study, I have used multiple sources to collect data, and data from document analysis and interviews are triangulated. For example, when I was identifying key events of developing the quality assurance system at XJTLU, I firstly consulted my past experience from participating in the accreditation events by the University of Liverpool, which helped me to identify key documents to be reviewed and participants to be interviewed. I collected further evidence of the key events from archival documents analysis, from which the University of Liverpool's accreditation has been found having impact on XJTLU's quality assurance system. Therefore, it is considered as a key event.

In addition, more than five participants had indicated that the accreditation by the University of Liverpool was a key event for XJTLU's quality assurance system. Using triangulation alone to support construct validity is insufficient as it is concerned with external reality only (Lee & Lings, 2008). Therefore, considerations of internal validity should be applied to enhance validity of case study research. According to Gibbert & Ruigrok (2010), in data collection and analysis stages, presence of causal relationships between variables and results can be considered as internal validity. Internal validity can be evidenced by 'providing detail about how the data were analysed, for example coding and within-case and cross-case analysis, which could include an explanation of how data were triangulated across data types and sources' (Farquhar 2012, p.101). In the data analysis section, detailed explanations have been provided on data coding and analysis, which helped enhance the internal validity of my research.

My research also employed two other techniques as summarized by Reige (2003) to enhance the validity. Miles & Huberman (1994) proposed that display of

illustrations and diagrams in the data analysis phase could increase internal validity and assist explanation building. Diagrams of key events in chronological order will be displayed in the data analysis section, to provide clear and straightforward presentation of the dataset. According to Yin (1994), comparing evidence with the existing literature in data analysis can help clarify that the contributions are within the scope and boundaries of the research rather than larger population. In the research method section, the scope and boundaries of the research had been clearly defined to help achieve reasonable analytical generalizations. During data analysis, the emerging patterns and themes from data are compared with existing literature to enhance validity.

Sikes & Potts (2008) point out that practitioner researchers often conduct research of the phenomenon they are embedded in, so that it is important to keep critical distance to develop legitimately new knowledge. Although I am conducting a case study of the organisation I am working for, I don't work in the division responsible for quality assurance. This has ensured that I have some critical distance from the research topic I am investigating. However, since I work in the organisation and may seek collaboration within the organisation in the future, I need to constantly raise the awareness of my role as practitioner researcher during the process of research design.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Reliability is an assessment of the consistency and stability of evidence used in research and it can ensure when the research was repeated, there won't be random error and the researcher would arrive at the same conclusions (Farquhar, 2012). To achieve reliability, researchers are required to demonstrate transparency and replication in the research process (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). To ensure transparency, I have carefully documented the data and references used for the case study. As shown in the data analysis section, summary of key documents analysed for quality assurance systems of the UK and China had been displayed

in a table, with clear indications of the years and authors of the documents.

To increase the reliability of my research, I have recorded all interviews conducted for collecting data for the research, as recording data mechanically is another technique to increase reliability (Nair & Riege, 1995). Yin (1994) suggested that conducting several pilot studies to test the case study protocol could be used to increase reliability. Before interviewing participants invited for the research, I have conducted a pilot interview with a critical friend, who gave some useful advices on the interview protocol, interview questions, and ways to ask follow-up questions, based on which, I have modified the interview questions to avoid directive questions, as suggested by Alvesson (2003) that the purpose of interview is to let participant to describe the world by how they perceive it. I have also reviewed and amended the interview questions to ensure they are neutral without revealing any preference or positioning of myself.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Yin (2011) emphasizes that upholding a strong sense of ethics is pivotal to qualitative researchers, as they make numerous discretionary choices during the process of research. In his book about qualitative research, two important aspects of ethical considerations were highlighted: setting and maintaining ethical standards of conduct, and protecting human subjects. The first aspect is related to researcher's conduct of ethics, and the latter refers to obtaining approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Both of these two ethical aspects have been considered in my research.

Disclosure of the conditions that might influence the conduct of research is an important way to research integrity (Yin, 2011). In the methodology chapter, disclosure of how participants were selected has been explained. However, disclosure of the methodological conditions is not enough for qualitative research, as personal conditions such as influence of researcher's demographic profile and

researcher's affiliation with the participants also affect the research lens and process (Yin, 2011). With suggestion from my supervisor, I have considered my personal conditions from the insider-researcher perspective. Although insider research is easy for the researcher to establish closer ties and familiarity with the cultural and other contextual conditions, it may also cause ethical risks in power implications (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Stephenson & Greer (1981) propose two potential risks of role duality for insider researcher: the first is the role conflicts and value conflict, and the other is related to who are researched after the research is completed. To handle these issues, research can separate the roles of researcher and organisational member as much as possible.

When I invited participants to take the interviews, I told them in advance that I would record the whole interview in order to get their consent to do the recording. At each interview, before turning on the recorder, I also indicated to them that the following conversations would be recorded.

As the case study research site is the organisation I work for, and most participants are my colleagues, I have taken steps to ensure that my research adheres to ethical guidelines. When selecting participants, I had been cautious to avoid selecting people who have direct reporting responsibilities to me. All participants interviewed for the study are from different areas of the University, and five of them are academic faculty or academic faculty in leadership role and seven of them are university leaders, administrators and administrators in manager roles. Brannick & Coghlen (2007) indicate that the biggest dilemma for insider researchers is that they have to write reports based on their findings of the organisation, which may be considered a spying or breaking peer norms. Insider researchers also need to manage organisational politics if they want to progress within the organisation. In order to reduce the potential conflicts that may be caused by being an insider researcher, I briefed to participants about the research before the interview, gave adequate explanation about the purpose of the research,



and made sure that participants understand the research outcomes would be used for my thesis only and won't be used in any type of university official assessment of quality assurance standards or staff's performance.

IRB approval initially started with medical and public health research, as this kind of research has potential risks of harming participants during their testing of new drug or other treatment. IRB approval is now required for all study with human participants as social and behavioural science research may also have risks (Yin, 2011). In general, IRB of different universities and research organisations have different processes, but all of them follow four main procedures based on the guidelines issued by National Research Council. These procedures include: 1) obtaining voluntary informed consent from participants with their signature; 2) assessing the harms, risks and benefits of the research and minimizing any harm to the participants; 3) selecting participants equitably; and 4) assuring confidentially participants' identities (National Research Council, 2003). Before the start of my research, I have obtained the ethical approval from IRBs of both the University of Liverpool and XJTLU.

According Libérale & Kovach (2017), the purpose of IRB approval is to 'protect the ethical rights and welfare of human subjects from research risks through the initial and continuing review of research protocols, adverse events, amendments, and other issues' (p.37). Therefore, in the ethical approval form of the University of Liverpool, I provided a detailed description of how participants were selected, approached and informed of the research, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. In particular, the potential risk of insider researcher's role and power relations with participants has been addressed, as stated in previous section. The details about the local setting have also been reported in the ethical approval form. I explained the local cultural practices in obtaining informed consent. Taking account of the fact that in Chinese culture, face to face communication is considered more sincere and more effective, I also sought opportunities to talk to participants face to face

whenever possible to make them feel comfortable about participating in the research, in addition to emailing participants the consent form and information sheet with a brief introduction of the project and the reason I have approached the participants,. The ethical approval of XJTLU is more straightforward with an assessment of the risk of the research. In addition to providing researcher and supervisor's information, a full summary of the research, assessment of low risk research should also be completed through ticking 'yes' or 'no' to a number of questions. The approval letters from the University of Liverpool and XJTLU are attached in the appendix of this thesis.

In this research, I have also considered confidentiality and protection of data for research ethics. To ensure the confidentiality and maintain anonymity of participants, I have replaced the names of participants with codes. Considering that the roles of the participants have some influence on the research results, I have used words such as 'university leader', 'faculty member (leadership role)', 'faculty member' and 'professional service staff' in the research rather than their job titles. To protect the data, I have stored all research data on three locations, the desktop at work, the laptop at home and a memory stick. I also saved the emails to participants inviting them to take part in the interviews on my local computer driver in case that the email sever has some technical problem.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the result of the research. The findings from data analysis answer the research questions: (1) to what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and, if so, how do they interact with each other; and (2) how XJTLU responds to multiple institutional logics if they are evident. Detailed findings are presented in the following sections.

### 4.1 Overview

When analysing the codes, two themes have emerged. It is found that the codes for the Chinese quality assurance system highlight a national system with top-down practice and with prescribed criteria. In contrast, the UK quality assurance system is a practice to ensure the institution's ability to establish a robust quality assurance system and to implement the system with a self-critical attitude. These characteristics summarized from the codes are also supported by the excerpts of the interviews. Based on the analysis, the two themes are named as government-driven and self-regulation, which reflects the characteristics of the institutional logics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems respectively.

The findings demonstrate that the characteristics of Chinese quality assurance system highlight the importance of compliance; the strategy focuses on control of the development of institutions of higher education. The quality review method is mainly in the format of government approval and external inspections, based on prescriptive criteria with a focus on data illustrating adherence to these policies and standards. The outcome of a Chinese quality assurance review is normally pass or not pass, which influences national funding allocations to universities. The behaviour pattern for Chinese quality assurance system is acquiescence.

The findings related to the UK quality assurance system show that the objective is enhancement of student's learning, and the strategy is to increase quality and reputation. The review method combines internal and external review, and the

criteria are formative with a focus on data illustrating the institutional quality assurance framework and its implementation, and the student experience. The key outcome of the UK quality assurance is recommendations for future improvements. The behaviour pattern required by UK quality assurance is active and self-critical.

Greenwood et al. (2011) point out that the differences of logics are presented through practice, protocols, and performance criteria. The findings demonstrate that the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems have divergent rules, protocols and performance criteria, so they represent different institutional logics. Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that the Chinese quality assurance system represents a government-driven institutional logic, and the UK quality assurance system represents a self-regulation institutional logic.

The characteristics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems summarized from the codes are also supported by the excerpts from the interviews. Based on the findings and data analysis, two emerging themes can best represent the institutional logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. The categories and sub-categories of Chinese and the UK quality assurance systems are presented in Table 4a and Table 4b.

***Table 4a: Category and Sub-categories of Chinese Quality Assurance System***

Characteristics	Codes	Sub-category	Category
Objective	Compliance	Compliance and control	Government-driven
Strategy	Increase control		
Review method	Approval and inspections		
Review criteria	Prescriptive	Uniform criteria	
Data focus	Data that illustrates adherence to policies and standards		
Outcome	Pass or not pass	Outcome-oriented	

Behavior pattern	Acquiescence		
------------------	--------------	--	--

**Table 4b: Category and Sub-categories of the UK Quality Assurance System**

Characteristics	Codes	Sub-category	Category
Objective	Student learning experience	Student engagement	Self-regulation
Strategy	Increase reputation and quality		
Review method	Internal and external reviews	External evaluation and examining processes	
Review criteria	Formative		
Data focus	Data that illustrates institutional framework of quality assurance and implementation, and student's experience		
Outcome	Recommendations for improvement	Continuous enhancement of quality and standards	
Behavior pattern	Active and self-critical		

The interpretation of interview data answers the research questions about how XJTLU responds to different relationships between the multiple institutional logics, and the underlying strategies XJTLU adopted in order to respond to the multiple logics. Three themes have emerged from the data analysis of interview data, which reflect XJTLU's strategies in responding to multiple logics. The strategies are optimising organisational structure, being innovative in criteria interpretation and programme design, and empowerment of staff. The findings are aligned with relevant theory which claims that organisations may employ organisational identity, structural differentiation and identity scripts to respond to multiple institutional logics.

The findings also show that since XJTLU staff are from more than 50 different countries, in addition to the influence of government-driven and self-regulation logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, they are

also influenced by their previous experiences and values. The analysis goes further down to the individual participant's level to present how multiple logics were experienced by staff, faculty and leaders, and how they contribute to the institution's responses to conflicting logics. The analysis also draws on literature on multiple institutional logics to compare how multiple institutional logics in the professional organisations or medical field are manifested to those in the higher education field. The following sections present the detailed analysis of the case study.

## **4.2 Institutional Logics of Chinese and UK Quality Assurance System**

According to Thornton & Ocasio (2008), institutional logics are the practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules that are constructed socially, and institutional logics provide meaning to individual's social reality. Through thematic analysis of the whole dataset, the characteristics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems are coded into seven categories, which are objective, strategy, review method, review criteria, outcome, data focus and behaviour pattern. These codes are compared and analysed, to generate the main differences of the Chinese and UK systems. Based on these differences, subcategories are developed. Through analysis of the subcategories, two themes are generated. The two final themes are named as government-driven and self-regulation, which reflect the institutional logics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems respectively. The following sections describe in details how the two themes emerge, the reasons for naming them, and the manifestation of the two logics at XJTLU. In addition, some new trends of the Chinese quality assurance will also be summarized to add an additional level of analysis to the research topic.

### **4.2.1 Government-driven Logic of the Chinese Quality Assurance System**

The quality assurance system of Chinese universities is dominated by a government-driven institutional logic. The findings show the characteristics of government-driven logic in objective, strategy, review method, review criteria,

outcome, data focus, and behaviour pattern, which are summarised into three subcategories called compliance and control, uniform criteria and outcome-oriented. These three subcategories reflect the norms of Chinese quality assurance system and lead to generation of the government-driven theme.

### Compliance and control

This section presents the findings from document analysis and interview data of one of the sub-categories of Chinese quality assurance system.

Document analysis of *Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degree* (MoE, 2004) shows the following description of the Chinese academic degree awarding power:

*The degree awarding power of institutions of higher education should be approved by the National Degree Committee or the authorised Provincial Degree Committee. Institutions with Degree Awarding Power should award degrees according to the approved the degree type and programme title. The criteria for approval of degree awarding power for institutions are defined by the National Degree Committee. Without approval, no institutions of higher education and individual can award academic degrees. (MoE, 2004, p. 2)*

The above quote demonstrates that a newly approved institution of higher education by the Ministry of Education does not have a natural right to award undergraduate degree. Institutions of higher education have to comply with the criteria in order to be granted degree awarding power. Yin (2018) claims that document may reflect the bias of the document author. The above quote is from the government regulation on academic degree. The tone of the author presents strong authority and power, which reflects the perspectives of the author. A close analysis of the above statement also reveals the power relationship of Chinese government in the quality control process. The word 'should' has been repeatedly

used to highlight the government's power in determining whether a new university or new programme can be granted degree awarding power. The final sentence also emphasizes the fact that Chinese academic degree is a national degree, and institutions cannot award degree without government's approval. Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that organisational decisions are influenced by those with power. The Chinese government has the power to design policy and regulation, which determined that all universities in China need to comply with government requirements, especially when it comes to quality assurance.

According to the *Notice on Review of Degree Awarding Power Application* (DoE, 2007) issued by Jiangsu Provincial Degree Committee, which is the authorised government body to evaluate the degree awarding power for institutions in Jiangsu Province:

*The evaluation of applications for institutional degree awarding power and degree awarding power for undergraduate degree programmes should take place in accordance with the relevant degree evaluation index system. Evaluation of institutional degree awarding power is based on the Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power and involves onsite inspection. Evaluation of degree awarding power for undergraduate degree programmes is based on the Index System for Degree Programmes for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power in Higher Education Institutions and normally takes place through desk-based document review. (DoE, 2007, p. 2)*

The above excerpts show that the application and approval of degree awarding power have two layers of evaluation: the evaluation of whether the institution is qualified to award undergraduate degrees, and the evaluation of whether the quality of the undergraduate degree programmes meet the requirements of relevant criteria and standards set out by the Chinese National Degree Committee.



According to the notice, only after the institution has operated nearly four years, when the first cohort of undergraduates is about to graduate, can the institution apply for awarding undergraduate degrees.

Wang (2014) claims that minimum standard quality assurance approach is mainly used for newly established or underdeveloped institutions of higher education, in which a mature quality assurance system has yet to be established but the quality of the provision needs to be assured. She indicates that a minimum standard approach is normally used by government for compliance purposes. For the approval of an institution's degree awarding powers, the Ministry of Education checks whether the institution complies with the minimum standards for delivering undergraduate degree programmes, through reviewing the operation of the institution against the index system.

The summary report of XJTU's Degree Awarding Power application indicates that the evaluation of institutional Degree Awarding Power is based on a number of areas including operation and development, development of degree programmes, academic staff team, teaching conditions, and teaching process. Each of the index categories has a break-down list with more specific requirements and standards. Table 5 below shows the *Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power* (MoE, 2007). Institutions are reviewed and graded according to their compliance to the criteria included in the index system. Only institutions with a pass grade can be granted degree awarding powers.

***Table 5: Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power***

First Grade Index	Second Grade Index	Content and Criteria

<b>1. Operation and Development</b>	1.1 Positioning of the university	The university is correctly positioned with scientific and rational development planning, clear development orientation and effective implementation.
	1.2 Ideas to run the university	There are correct and clear ideas to run the university with advanced educational thoughts and strong quality awareness.
	1.3 Operating features	There are distinctive features to run the university with good development trend.
	1.4 General management	The university is well-structured and managed with clear duties and good coordination. Records and teaching documents are kept well. Relevant systems are well-established and strictly executed. Management is effective to serve the teaching.
<b>2. Development of Degree Programmes</b>	2.1 Development plan of degree programmes	Degree programmes are opened and structured rationally with some special influential programmes.  Degree programmes are opened on a sound disciplinary basis to meet social demands.
	2.2 Measures and effect	There are strong and fruitful measures for development of degree programmes with favourable teaching conditions and teaching quality assurance to the students' satisfaction.
	2.3 Training scheme	

		<p>The training scheme complies with training purposes, highlighting all-round development morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically. It's helpful to improve humanistic and scientific quality, and cultivate innovation spirit and practical abilities, and it's well-operated.</p>
<b>3. Academic Staff Team</b>	*3.1 Student-staff ratio <sup>①</sup>	<p>It's ranked good or above if the student-staff ratio is equal to or less than 16:1 (14:1 for medical colleges and 9:1 for colleges of physical education and colleges of arts); and ranked below grade and scored 0 if the student-staff ratio is equal to or over 22:1 (17:1 for colleges of physical education and colleges of arts).</p>
	3.2 overall structure	<p>The academic staff team enjoys reasonable overall structure (specialties, academic and age structures) with favourable development trend. It's ranked good or above if 50% or more of the full-time teachers hold master's or above degrees, and ranked below grade and scored 0 if it's lower than 30%.</p>
	*3.3 Job qualifications	<p>It's ranked good or above if the teachers with competent job qualifications (leading teachers holding at least lecturer's titles or master's degrees) account for 95% or more, and ranked below grade if it's less than 85%.</p>

	3.4 Development plan of academic staff team and results	There is perfect training mechanism for academic staff with effective measures and significant effect. It's possible to carry out visiting and academic exchange activities. Most of the backbone teachers are able to participate in scientific research.
<b>4. Teaching Conditions</b>	*4.1 Four educational expenditures per student <sup>®</sup>	Four educational expenditures per student can meet the requirements of talents cultivation. It's ranked good or above if four educational expenditures per student account for 25% or more of the tuition income, and ranked below grade and scored 0 if less than 20%.
	4.2 Occupation of teaching & admin space per student <sup>®</sup>	There is a variety of classrooms to meet teaching demands and other teaching buildings to meet the educational requirements. It's ranked below grade and scored 0 if the occupation of teaching and admin space per student is less than 16 m <sup>2</sup> (14 m <sup>2</sup> for comprehensive, normal and nationalities universities and colleges, 9 m <sup>2</sup> for universities and colleges of languages, finance and economics, and political science and law, 22 m <sup>2</sup> for colleges of physical education and 18 m <sup>2</sup> for colleges of arts).
	*4.3 Value of teaching and	

	research instrument and equipment per student <sup>®</sup>	There are sufficient and advanced teaching and research instrument and equipment with high utilization that can play an important role in undergraduate teaching. It's ranked below grade and scored 0 if the value of teaching and research instrument and equipment per student is less than RMB 5,000 (RMB 3,000 for universities and colleges of languages, finance and economics, and political science and law, RMB 4,000 for colleges of physical education and colleges of arts). Besides, part of the teaching and research instrument and equipment are newly purchased.
	*4.4 Books per student <sup>®</sup>	The library is effectively used with advanced management measures. There're 3 or more books purchased annually per student. It's ranked below grade if there're less than 80 books per student.
	4.5 Construction of labs and placement bases	Various teaching laboratories are well-equipped with advanced equipment and high utilization that can play an important role in undergraduate teaching. There're well-established internal and external placement bases.
	4.6 Construction of campus website	The campus website is advanced and well-operated, and plays an important in undergraduate teaching.
<b>5. Teaching Process</b>	5.1 Teaching plans and execution	There are overall thoughts, feasible plans and strong supporting measures for teaching. Teaching plans are well-implemented with significant effect.

	5.2 Teaching reform and development (including development of courses)	There is clear general thought, feasible plans and strong supporting measures. Reform is well implemented with significant effect. Some provincial or ministerial teaching awards have been won.
	5.3 Development of teaching materials	Development of teaching materials is planned and guaranteed with some teaching materials that have won provincial or ministerial or above awards used. Actively introduce advanced and suitable teaching materials.
	5.4 Practical teaching	Frequently update the content. System is scientifically and reasonably designed to meet requirements of talents training. Create favourable conditions for students to early participate in scientific research and innovation activities. Laboratories open for a long time, covering widely with good effect. It's ranked below grade if the launch rate of the experiments required in syllabus is less than 90%. It's ranked good or above if courses with comprehensive, designing experiments account for 80% or more of total courses with experiments, and ranked below grade and scored 0 if it's less than 50%.

	5.5 Teaching quality control	There is perfect management system that is strictly implemented with significant effect. Complete and reasonable quality standards are introduced to reflect the university's level and status and are strictly implemented. The teaching quality control system is scientific, perfect and well-operated with significant effect. There're powerful and well executed control measures for dissertation or final year project quality.
<b>6. Teaching Management</b>	6.1 Teaching management team	The teaching management team is well-structured and stable with high quality and strong service awareness.
	6.2 Teaching management system	Records and teaching documents are well kept; relevant systems are well-established and strictly implemented with significant effect.
	6.3 Study on teaching management	There are some results, papers or awards in educational and teaching research. The research results are helpful to promote teaching reform.
<b>7. Talent Training</b>	7.1 Basic theories and basic skills	Students are strong in basic theories and skills, innovative and creative with a large number of research results, and scientific, technological and cultural works.
	7.2 Dissertation and Final Year project	The subjects are selected in combination with the reality with respect to the nature, difficulty, weight and practice, reflecting the objectives of talents cultivation with high quality dissertations or projects.

	7.3 Comprehensive quality	There are perfect and effective measures for moral education. Students are well-developed in moral and cultural qualities and mental health. It's ranked good or above if the up-to-standard rate of students' physical health is equal to or greater than 97%, and ranked below grade and scored 0 if it's less than 95%. Mass sports and athletic sports are developed well.
	7.4 Teaching style	The university attaches great importance to the development of teachers' virtue and demeanour. Teachers are strict in fulfilling their job duties, pursuing their studies and teaching.
	7.5 Learning style	There are effective and fruitful measures to develop learning style and students' enthusiasm. The students observe the university's regulations and rules, honest in examinations. There're abundant and vibrant scientific and cultural activities on the campus after school, actively participated by most students with significant effect.

In the above *Index System for Higher Education Institutions for Undergraduate's Degree Awarding Power* (MoE, 2007), it is worth to note that the words describing values such as 'correct', 'clear', 'advanced', 'strong', 'well' and 'sound' are used frequently. For example, most of the above words are presented in the sentence 'There are correct and clear ideas to run the university with advanced educational thoughts and strong quality awareness'. Huang, Adamson & Lee (2014) claim that although a worldwide trend of decentralisation has been identified, the Chinese government actually strengthened control of institution through predetermined



quality evaluation methods and criteria. According to Thornton & Ocasio (2008), the notion of institutional logic refers to assumptions, values, beliefs and rules constructed socially. The use of the words such as ‘correct’, ‘advanced’ and ‘well’ in the index system is actually a method to embed Chinese government’s values of quality of higher education to institutions.

The above document analysis shows that compliance with regulations and standards defined by the government is a key feature of the Chinese degree awarding power application process, which itself is an important approach to the quality control of higher education in China. The emphasis on compliance with regulations and standards are also demonstrated in other Chinese quality assurance approaches. Approval of new degree programmes by the Chinese Ministry of Education is granted on satisfactory compliance and adherence to standards.

For Chinese universities, what new degree programmes they can offer is not a decision that can be made by the universities. The introduction of a new degree programme has to get approval from the Ministry of Education. According to the revised *Regulation on Administration of Establishment of Undergraduate Programme by Institutions of Higher Education* (MoE, 2012), universities have to submit an application to the Ministry of Education for introducing new degree programmes. The proposed new programme titles should be listed on the Catalogue of Undergraduate Programmes published by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the university has to demonstrate that there are relevant subject areas in the university to support the development of the new programmes, that faculty and professional support staff are in place to deliver the programmes, that teaching and laboratory facilities required for the programmes are ready, and that there is a steady and adequate market demand for graduates in the new programmes. If the new programme the university is applying for is not included in the Ministry of Education’s catalogue, additional approval and supporting documents are required. Wang (2014) explains that the reason that government has strict control on the

titles of new degree programme is partly based on a national subject area development plan.

The government's strict control of new programme titles is evident in XJTLU's practice. XJTLU as a new university only has 6 undergraduate degree programme approved at the beginning, and needs to apply for 3-5 new programmes every year to enable steady and healthy growth of its subject areas. Because the university is accredited by the University of Liverpool, each new programme application needs to go through the Chinese Ministry of Education process, as well as the approval and validation process of the University of Liverpool. However, some new programme proposals of XJTLU were not approved because they were not included the Ministry of Education's programme catalogue.

When talking about the Chinese new programme application, a participant indicated that a new programme was rejected by the Ministry of Education because the programme title was not aligned with the Catalogue of Undergraduate Programme published by the Ministry of Education. She explained that mapping a new programme title to the programme catalogue was essential for acquiring approval. Because the Public Health programme was not included in the programme catalogue, in order to get approval, the programme title had been changed to Public Affairs Management which is classified as a management subject. However, a change of the programme title was not enough. The participant reflected that modifications to the programme specifications were also needed.

*The Public Health programme in the University of Liverpool is classified as science programme with more modules related to health and no modules in economics or management. In order to get Ministry of Education's approval, we have to modify the programme specification and add modules in management and economics and arrange placement opportunities in hospital*

*and health organisations for students to satisfy the Ministry of Education's requirements on practical learning. (P6, Administrator)*

The participant's reflection on alignment of degree programme title to the National Catalogue of Undergraduate Programme demonstrates the Chinese quality assurance system's emphasis on compliance with government regulations and standards. If the title or programme contents is not aligned, adjustments must be made in order to get approval. The finding echoes Wang's (2014) claim that the government control on degree programme title originated from national subject planning.

Another participant explained the background of government control over the new programme approval. He indicated that in the Catalogue of Undergraduate Programme, there were some programmes called controlled programmes meaning universities cannot introduce these programmes unless special approval was acquired. The reason behind this practice is that the Central Government approves new programmes according to the county's strategic development directions. The interviewee pointed out that:

*Programmes that can produce talents for national key industries are more likely to get a greenlight, in contrast, programmes with low market demands and low graduate employment rates would be listed as controlled programmes and applications to introduce these programmes won't get approval. (P1, Administrator in Manger Role)*

The above statement demonstrates that central planning and control by government are important policy instruments for achieving policy objectives, similar to Harman's (1998) claim that central control can be used as an important quality assurance mechanism in some countries. However, the mechanism is also criticized for lack of diversity and relevance to quality assurance. Therefore,

greater devolution in central control to institutions has become a new trend in the past decades. Nevertheless, the findings from document analysis and interview data show that central control is still a key feature of Chinese quality assurance system. This claim is also aligned with Huang, Adamson & Lee's (2014) research, who point out that external evaluation of institutions' processes and performance is one of the quality assurance approaches implemented by the Central Government to strengthen control over institutions of higher education. Wang (2014) also indicates that the primary strategy for Chinese quality assurance system is to increase control so as to serve the economic and political agenda of the country.

Chinese quality assurance system's emphasis on compliance is due to the historical background of the development of the higher education sector. In 1990, the Chinese Ministry of Education published *The Temporary Regulation on Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions* (MoE, 1990), which set out the requirements and procedures for quality assurance in higher education. The regulation was implemented in 1994 to evaluate the quality of undergraduate education provided by different types of institutions of higher education. In 2002, a more comprehensive quality evaluation mechanism called *The Higher Education Institutions Undergraduate Teaching Evaluation Programme* (MoE, 2002), was implemented on all institutions of higher education awarding undergraduate degrees. The evaluation was carried out every 5 years, with the aim to assess key areas such as mission, staff, equipment, programme establishment and reform, management, learning environment and outcome (HEEC, 2013). The systematic requirements and criteria for every aspect of the operation and management of undergraduate teaching takes compliance and control to a higher level. According to Huang, Adamson and Lee (2014), the evaluation has also caused complaints by many academics due to the bureaucratic nature of the process. Although the Chinese higher education sector has gone through several rounds of reform with the aim of giving greater autonomy and flexibility for the

development of a market economy (Chou, 2008), government control and influence is still a main characteristic of Chinese higher education and its quality assurance system.

The findings shown in this section support the claim that various Chinese quality assurance approaches emphasize compliance with relevant regulations and standards published by the Chinese Ministry of Education, with the objective of increasing government control over institutions of higher education. The findings echo Wang's (2014) claim that the quality assurance measures in Chinese higher education system focus on compliance with government requirements, in order to ensure government control over universities, especially the top public universities. Government's expectations to enhance the quality of higher education are materialised through various quality assurance approaches such as approval of degree awarding powers, new programme, national subject review and undergraduate teaching evaluation. The evaluation indicators, rules and regulations associated with these quality assessment approaches focus on control and compliance, which have framed the norms of the institutional logic associated with the Chinese quality assurance system.

### *Uniform criteria*

According to excerpts and quotes from government regulations and notices presented in the previous section, the various quality evaluation approaches adopted by the Chinese government are mostly through the methods of government approval and evaluation based on criteria defined by the government.

The claim that the government uses uniform criteria to evaluate all kinds of institutions of higher education is supported from documents related to approval of XJTLU's degree awarding power. In 2010, XJTLU was reviewed for approval of Chinese degree awarding power. The evaluation includes five steps: submitting application documents, assessment by experts commissioned by the provincial

Department of Education, onsite inspection by the expert panel, publication of the initial decision for comment by the public, and announcement of the final decision. Analysis of the Application Document List (XJTLU, 2010) developed according to the Index System developed by Ministry of Education shows that extensive documents related to the ‘establishment and development, development of degree programmes, academic staff team, teaching conditions, and talents cultivation’ (XJTLU, 2010, p. 1) are required to be submitted.

Within the document list, a specific document called teaching conditions which should show XJTLU’s compliance with the detailed criteria for university’s assets, facilities, number of staff and learning resources is required. Table 6 shows the key indicators and compliance requirements for application of undergraduate degree awarding power. The table shows specific criteria for assessing whether the teaching facilities meet government requirements for delivering undergraduate degree programmes. The criteria are uniform standards for assessing all types of institutions including public, private and joint-venture institutions.

***Table 6: Key Indicators for Institutional Degree Awarding Power***

<b>Key indicators and compliance requirements of Institutions of Higher Education</b>			
<b>Indicator Category and discription</b>		<b>Key indicators and compliance requirements</b>	<b>Minimum requirement</b>
<b>Compulsary indicators</b>	These indicators are minimum standards required by government. All institutions are required to meet the standards.	Ratio of student-to-staff	<18: 1
		Percentage of academic staff with graduate degree (%)	> 30%
		Average area of teaching administrative space per student (square meter / student)	> 14 square meters
		Average assets value of teaching and research equipment per student (yuan / student)	> 5000 Yuan
		Average books per student (book / student)	> 100 books

As shown in the above table, for the successful application of institutional Chinese undergraduate degree awarding power, the student-to-staff ratio should be less than 18:1, the percentage of academic staff with a graduate degree should be more

than 30%, the average area of teaching and administrative space per student should be more than 14 square meters, the average assets value of teaching and research equipment per student should be more than 5,000RMB (approximately about 550 pounds at the time), and the average library books per student should be more than 100 books. Among these criteria, XJTLU could not meet the requirements of student-to-staff ratio and the average library books per student, because the government statistics count students who are studying at the University of Liverpool on the 2+2 articulation route as XJTLU's students, which consequently makes student number bigger than the number that are studying at the XJTLU campus. The prescriptive criteria caused concerns about whether XJTLU would get the undergraduate degree awarding power successfully. The Annual Monitoring Visit Report developed by the University of Liverpool recorded the concerns on this issue:

*Although the Senior Management Team remains optimistic that a successful outcome for the application will emerge, the main issue remains the library. The ratio of books to student is targeted at 100:1 and XJTLU is working hard to provide the required ratio. The UoL library has been cited within the application as it is used by students studying on the 2+2 programme model. The other main issue is that XJTLU will have to demonstrate that it owns the land and buildings and although transfer of ownership from the Government to XJTLU will take place over the next three to five years, XJTLU will have to provide a detailed explanation of the migration of ownership. (The University of Liverpool, 2010)*

The above quote shows that uniform criteria have been used to assess the teaching condition of institutions of higher education, despite the types of institutions, and fast development of digital learning resources. XJTLU as a joint-venture institution, 2+2 articulation route is one of the main marketing strategy to attract students. However, since all students recruited to XJTLU have been entered to the

Ministry of Education database, the total number accounted for student-to-staff ratio is more than the actual number of student studying at the XJTLU campus, which has caused XJTLU student-to-staff could not meet the government criterion. Also, the criteria for average book per student only count hardcopy books have also made XJTLU's statistics fall below the government requirement. Although special considerations have been given during evaluation of XJTLU's degree awarding power in 2010, and XJTLU has been granted the degree awarding power, the criteria are also used for annual government review of universities, so the issue is still standing.

When talking about the criteria for Chinese quality assurance system, one of the interviewees indicated that:

*The formality of Chinese quality assessment is more of stereotype. All the requirements and criteria are clearly listed without any flexibility. Many of the questions asked in the assessment criteria are yes or no questions, and therefore closed the door for constructive discussion. For assessment of a newly developed university, there is a rigid index that has to be met, including library books per student, and land space owned by the university. This caused a lot of problems and the Chinese quality assurance system should learn from the UK, as they don't have such prescriptive requirements. (P1, Administrator in Manager Role)*

Although using criteria such as library books per student and student-to-staff ratio is designed to set minimum standards for universities being reviewed, and to guarantee that adequate academic resources have been allocated to newly established universities. However, the rules of how much resources are considered adequate to a new university are defined by the government using uniform criteria, despite that different types of universities may require different resources. For example, research-intensive universities may need more lab facilities than



teaching-focused universities. According to Shaw (2014), social norms may have influence on institutional logics. Using uniform criteria to assess the quality of institutions forms a norm of passivity, and thus eliminates the possibility of constructive discussion on what resources are needed by individual institutions. The norms undertake action directed at the compliance target, which avoids consideration of quality in a wider sense. As a result, some institutions of higher education passively accept the norms and draw back their development from their planned directions.

When talking about the Chinese new programme application process, a participant also reflected that Chinese new programme approval focused more on the quantitative requirements such as number of professors and associate professors delivering the programme, and the ratio of faculty that have PhD degrees.

Another participant pointed out that Chinese quality assurance is more focused on teaching quality.

*Chinese quality assurance is a top-down process that uses uniform standards to assess all institutions of higher education and some of these standards are not suitable for all universities. For example, the evaluation of undergraduate degree emphasizes practical and experimental learning, and the same requirements are also applied for social science and arts subjects. (P8, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The use of uniform criteria for evaluating the quality of all kinds of institutions of higher education presents the materialised practice (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012) of the Chinese quality assurance system. The expansion of higher education started in 1999, when Chinese higher education were facing challenges such as lack of resources and maintaining of high quality. In this context, using minimum standards to evaluate all kinds of universities was an

effective way to ensure quality, which has become materialised practice to represent the basic logic of the Chinese quality assurance system.

It is also noted that the evaluation index system for Institutional Undergraduate Degree Awarding Power does not include students' opinions or student learning experience, and therefore, whether student learning experience is enhanced by the process cannot be judged. The exclusion of student opinion in quality evaluation is rooted in Chinese culture and history. Pyvis (2011) claims that Confucian pedagogy is central to Chinese educational tradition. Although Confucian pedagogy encourages interactive inquiry, it also respects the status of the teacher. It is traditionally considered that students do not know what they should learn and what is good learning, and therefore, their opinions are not included in the quality assurance assessment.

The National Subject Review of Social Science also reflects Chinese quality assurance's objective in compliance based on uniform criteria. The *National Subject Review of Social Science* (MoE, 2010) was introduced to ensure Chinese higher education produces graduates who can contribute to the development of the Chinese economy. The review mainly focused on modules related to ideology and politics, which are mandatory modules for all institutions of higher education in China. The review is conducted every four years with a detailed index system to assess the development and delivery of ideology and politics modules. A participant described how the review was limited to modules related to ideology and politics, and specific requirements were set for the review:

*The subject review is driven by the government and conducted by the local education administration authority. It has a very strict and detailed set of criteria and index for assessment of the quality of social science subjects, and universities have to follow the index to conduct self-evaluation first. The index has more than 20 criteria clearly specifying how to design the module*

*specification, how many credits are required, what content faculty should teach, the textbook to be used and even the style of teaching. (P5, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The subject review as a quality control method adopted by the Chinese government reflects Pyvis' (2011) claim that the quality of transnational programmes requires the transfer of values and understandings of cultural context. The ideology and politics modules included in the subject review are compulsory modules for all transnational programmes in China. These nationally required modules could transfer the values of Chinese cultural and political ideology to students to ensure they could contribute to the development of Chinese economy even though they have studied joint-venture programme leading to award by overseas institutions.

Using uniform criteria does not always lead to negative feedback. A participant think that the uniform criteria used by Ministry of Education (MoE) provides specific, clear and straightforward guidance to universities.

*My impression of the MoE requirements is more instructive. It is like the bluebook they provide to all institutions of higher education in China. So it is very clear of what to expect from universities and programmes. It is very specific, clear and straightforward. So it is relatively easy to follow. But for the UK, it is a lot more generic. So they do not give you specific requirements. For example, they don't tell you what modules should include in Civil Engineering programme. (P11, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above reflection reveals that the prescriptive criteria of Chinese quality assurance system have provided a straightforward and clear guidance to universities and programmes. At the same time, it also transfers values of Chinese nation through the pre-defined module list for programmes provided by

universities.

A participant gives the following comments about the values of Chinese higher education.

*The national values are embedded in every country's higher education system. The objective of Chinese higher education is to produce socialism successors. These values have been presented in the compulsory modules of ideology and politics and the military training. UK's higher education also has its own values such as independent thinking etc. (P4, Administrator in Manager Role)*

Quality assurance criteria set up by the government is a way to ensure that the values of the government are transferred or reproduced in programmes delivered by institutions of higher education. Using the pre-defined criteria to assess the quality of institutions can ensure that the national objective of higher education is achieved through the delivery of degree programmes.

In conclusion, findings from document analysis and interview data show that the Chinese quality assurance features compliance with government regulations and standards and control over the institution of higher education, using uniform criteria, despite the fact that different types of institutions at different stages of development may have different focuses on quality assurance, and also that the advancement of information technology may greatly change students' demand for on learning resources. According to Ocasio (1997), institutional logic has a profound effect on the decision-making process and its outcomes, because it affects how decision makers focus on a few things based on their beliefs and rules. Ocasio's (1997) claim explains why the Chinese government uses uniform criteria to evaluate the quality of different types of institutions. As Zha (2011) puts it, China has historically seen state control of higher education as an important means to strengthen state management, so the uniform criteria of quality evaluation can

be used as an effective way to ensure academic centralisation.

### Outcome-oriented

When talking about the outcome of Chinese quality assurance system, an interviewee gave the following comments about Chinese quality assurance systems:

*Compared to the UK quality assurance system, Chinese quality assurance is a conclusive evaluation. For example, the undergraduate teaching evaluation is a five-year cycle and the Degree Awarding Power is a four-year cycle, but there is no visit or evaluation during these years. The evaluation panel picks a particular date to visit, and gives a conclusion after the visit. The outcomes of the evaluation visits decide funding allocation and pass or not pass. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

According to the above comments, Chinese quality review focuses more on the outcomes rather than the educational process. The interview data echoes Huang's (2014) claim that the outcomes of Chinese quality assurance measures are mostly as summative in function for grading universities and funding allocation. Huang (2014) indicates that in some cases the results of reviews are even published by the government as a way to stimulate institutions to improve their quality. Because using outcomes of quality assessment to judge the operation and management of universities has become the norm, most universities only focus on how to achieve positive outcomes from government quality evaluation, and pay less attention to their internal quality control process.

Since the outcomes of quality evaluation are used as a reference for allocating funding to universities, the Chinese quality assurance system becomes the materialised practice which reflects government's values and beliefs of higher education. Wang (2014) reports that the quality assurance strategies implemented

by the Chinese government have been criticized by many academics. They commented that the national evaluation of undergraduate teaching was ‘too frequent and overwhelming to disturb normal teaching and research’, and what academics did for the evaluation was ‘mainly prepare documentation to tick the boxes’ (Wang, 2014, p. 258).

One participant pointed out that although many countries have national guideline for quality assurance, using performance as a reference for funding allocation does not necessarily lead to improvement of quality.

*The quality assurance projects are all driven by Chinese government. These projects include the undergraduate teaching evaluation, ‘211 project’, excellent course, etc. Government uses performance funding as an incentive to reward universities with good outcome in these quality assurance projects, which is somehow encouraging a bonus culture that may not necessarily lead to the healthy development of universities. (P1, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The participant’s comments are aligned with Wang’s (2014) claim that using funding as an incentive for the quality control of university’s performance may encourage universities to do things just to please the evaluation panel rather than focusing on enhancing teaching quality and student’s learning experience. The phenomenon of using funding as an incentive promote the values of outcome-oriented and doing things to impress rather than improve, which is not necessarily a good practice for long-term enhancement of the quality of universities.

*Among actual tension from my perspective from the different roles I have got, the most tensions come to the Degree Awarding Power time. Every time when we are working to apply for Degree Awarding Power, every degree programme that we were applying for Degree Awarding Power, there are*

*always something need to be worked on and something need to be changed. We don't have other choice but passively making changes according to government requirements. (P7, Academic Faculty with Leadership Role)*

Findings from analysis of the above interview data show that the behaviour pattern of the Chinese quality assurance system is acquiescence. Guerreiro, Rodrigues & Craig (2012) cite Oliver (1991) that organisation's response to institutional demands involve acquiescence, which entails habit, imitation and compliance. Because the outcomes of the quality assurance evaluations are used by the government to decide allocation of funding or other resources, universities tend to passively comply with regulations and standards in order to get government support, rather than actively self-evaluate their performance and enhance the quality of provision.

Participants P1 and P2, who have worked at Chinese public universities previously also commented on the behaviour pattern under the Chinese quality assurance system. Participant P1 indicated that Chinese quality assurance evaluation was the assessment of the archive management of documentation related to learning and teaching archive.

*In my previous job, we have been asked by a member of evaluation panel to deliver the Final Year Project of a specific student to their office at midnight. This request was to test the archive management of the university. (P1, Administrator with Manager Role)*

This statement shows that since compliance with government requirements and criteria has become the norms of the Chinese quality assurance practice, the beliefs of good quality not only lies in the evaluation of teaching, but also the management of files and staff's response speed to the government's request. This kind of belief may lead to universities adopt the acquiescence response strategy,

and encourage passive response to government requirements therefore making the real purpose of quality evaluation slip away from university's routine operation.

This outcome-oriented quality assurance approach may increase the workload on universities and encourage a culture of using quality measures to deal with government quality inspections rather than for long-term quality assurance planning. Another participant reflected on how some universities deal with the National Undergraduate Teaching Evaluation as follows:

*Some universities do not have systematic internal quality assurance requirements, so many records of the learning and teaching process were not archived. In order to present documentation to the review panel of the National Undergraduate Teaching Evaluation, some universities have asked staff to spend a long time to fabricate the documentation. (P2, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

Findings from the above analysis of data suggest that the outcome-oriented quality assurance has led to an acquiescent response by institutions of higher education. Rather than actively developing their internal policies and procedures for quality assurance, passively complying with the uniform criteria prescribed by government has become the norms for institutions. The norms of passivity have made institutions narrowly focus on areas that government pay attention to, without consideration on real enhancement of quality and student's learning experiences.

In summary, findings from document and interview data analysis show that the quality assurance approaches in China are national processes implemented by the government. The characteristics of the Chinese quality assurance system fall into three subcategories, including emphasis on compliance and control, use of uniform criteria and being outcome-oriented. The values of government have been



embedded to the evaluation criteria and materialised through various quality evaluation approaches. The approval of new degree programmes, institutional and programme Degree Awarding Power, and subject reviews ‘allow for strict state control over universities’ (Wang, 2014). It might be argued that the quality assurance systems in other countries also are featuring compliance and control. For example, Harman (1998) observes that government uses quality assurance to control what universities do. However, it is more evident from the interview data of this study that the Chinese quality assurance system is focused on compliance and control.

Although the Chinese government aims to develop a fit-for-purpose mechanism for assurance and enhancement of the quality of higher education, the quality assurance system of China tends to use uniform criteria to assess different types of universities. No matter whether reviewing new programmes, Degree Awarding Power, or specific subject areas, the review criteria are always based on pre-set indicators such as library books, student-to-staff ratio, campus space, lab facilities, and the national degree programme catalogue and curriculum, with a focus on compliance and central planning and control. The uniform criteria reflect the rules of what is considered good quality by the government and also help the government to ensure that national values are transferred in the degree programmes. Although using uniform criteria to assess different types of institutions have been criticised, since the outcomes of quality evaluation are used as a reference for funding allocation, the existing quality assurance practice has formed a norm of passivity, which encourages institutions to take acquiescence response in order to get government funding and support.

Hyvonen, Jarvinen & Pellinen (2009) claim that the notion of an institutional logic refers to beliefs, norms and rules that affect cognition and influence decision. The above analysis of findings demonstrates that the Chinese quality assurance system is a top-down process with the government setting up the norms and rules and

making the key decisions. This means that the Chinese quality assurance practice is applied to universities by the government, rather than universities voluntarily developing their own internal quality assurance policies and procedures. The principles associated with the Chinese quality assurance systems are acquiescence, low efficiency and prescriptiveness, with a focus on compliance. The interview data already reveals that staff involved in the Chinese quality assurance process feel the tension from the government-driven logic and have to passively follow government's requests to make changes to existing programmes.

Chinese quality assurance system's emphasis on compliance based on uniform criteria pre-defined by government has created norms of acquiescence, which leads to universities only make efforts to ensure their operation complies with the government requirements, and they do not have motivation to develop their own internal quality assurance processes and to pay real attention to aspects concerning quality of teaching, including the student learning experience. Based on the above analysis, it is therefore claimed that the quality assurance system of Chinese universities is dominated by the government-driven institutional logic, and the Chinese quality assurance system is used as a strategy for the government 'to monitor use of funding, to control faculty performance, and to supervise university development' (Wang, 2014, p. 260).

#### **4.2.2 Self-regulation Logic of the UK Quality Assurance System**

The findings from the analysis of documents related to accreditation and annual monitoring visits by the University of Liverpool and the interview data show that the UK quality assurance system is dominated by self-regulation institutional logic. This claim is illustrated through the analysis of the three subcategories of the characteristics of the UK quality assurance system, namely, student's engagement in the quality assurance process, external evaluation and examining processes, and the continuous enhancement of quality and standards.

### Student Engagement

Student engagement is a key element of the UK's quality assurance system. A participant recalled how student engagement was improved after the visit by QAA in 2012.

*QAA's review of XJTLU has resulted in some positive feedback, on the other hand, there are also recommendations regarding how to improve the effectiveness of the student-centred quality assurance system. At the beginning, we didn't have student representatives on major university academic committees. Later, we have devised an election policy on student representatives, but how to make students play their role more effectively, and how to guide them interact with the chairs of committees and their peers is still not easy. This issue has emergent partly because we have not provided sufficient training for student representatives, nevertheless, lack of a communication channel among students and their peers to help collect students' feedback is another reason. (P8, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above reflection shows that improving student's engagement in quality assurance is a key requirement by the UK quality assurance system. Student's engagement not only means that students are given opportunities to have their voice heard by the university, but also means that university is responsible to train students how to collect their peer's opinion and how to present their ideas clearly at various committee meetings. Student's engagement in quality assurance also reflects the values of UK Quality Code (QAA, 2015). It is stated in the code that:

*The values of UK Quality Code put all students at the heart of UK higher education, irrespective of their mode, location, level and subject of study. (QAA, 2015)*

The above statement explains why student engagement is so important for UK

quality review. Because ensuring student's experience is the core value of UK quality assurance system, no matter what subject students are studying, which level they are and where they are located, as long as they are studying towards a UK award, their experiences are the key concern for UK quality assurance system.

Student engagement is also evident in document analysis. According to the Glossary of Education Reform (2016), student engagement normally means the degree of attention and interest that students show when they are learning. It also means the ways in which school leaders and educators engage students in the governance and decision-making in school. From the analysis of the documents produced by XJTLU, including self-evaluation documents for the University of Liverpool's accreditation and annual monitoring visit, student learning experience is an important section that self-evaluation documents have to cover. During the University of Liverpool's onsite visit to XJTLU, the review panel also meets with students from different student groups to collect their views and feedback. XJTLU is committed to the development and sustaining of a stimulating, diverse and supportive environment that is conducive to learning. To that end, a student-centred culture is also pivotal to the university's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Students are encouraged to contribute to the development of learning, teaching and assessment through the provision of feedback and participation in institutional decision making.

Student's participation in departmental Internal Periodic and Annual Programme Review is another important part for XJTLU's quality assurance system. Student representative's opinions on the quality of the department's provision and programme delivery are recorded in the review meeting minutes, and departments will develop formal responses and actions for the points they raised. One of the participants gave the following comments about what XJTLU does with student feedback.

*We pay serious attention to student feedback, at least in our department we do. Because module questionnaire is completed anonymously, students tend to be more willing to give their comments on each module. As Head of Department, I would read through results of all module questionnaires to review whether there are problems flagged. For modules with negative feedback, I would discuss with the module leader on how to make improvements in the next year. To this end, student feedback is making real impacts on our quality of teaching, but this might not be the case in other Chinese universities. (P2, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The statement indicates that the UK quality assurance values student's experience and engagement. Therefore, student feedback collected from module questionnaires and end-of-year questionnaires is used as a means to enhance student's learning experience. At XJTLU, student feedback is carefully reviewed and responded for improvement in the next academic year. Students can also voice out their opinions through direct participation in the quality assurance processes. In Chinese universities, although students are asked to fill out a module questionnaire before they access their marks, the feedback collected from the questionnaire is not analysed and acted on seriously, and sometimes are not even available to academic staff. Therefore, the findings echo Wang's (2014) claim that students' opinions are not considered in Chinese quality assurance process.

The findings show that the UK quality assurance system values student's feedback and is committed to enhance student's learning experience, in order to increase university's reputation and quality. Engaging students in programme development and quality assurance processes have become the norms based on which the belief of putting students at the heart of higher education has become widely accepted and implemented.

#### External Evaluation and Examining Processes

External examining process is one of the key features of the UK quality assurance framework which has been well implemented and embedded in XJTLU's institutional and departmental quality assurance practice. The process assists the university to monitor the standards of its awards, to verify that those standards are appropriate for the award, to ensure that awards are comparable in standard with those for similar subjects and awards in the UK universities, and to ensure that assessment processes are appropriate, rigorous, fair and fairly operated.

When talking about the features of the quality assurance system at XJTLU, one of the participants who is working as administrative manager gave the following comments.

*When I joined XJTLU, I have read through all policies and regulations. The most impressive part to me was the externality feature of the UK quality assurance framework. Many of the university's quality assurance activities involve external or third party, so that in some key processes which Registry Office is responsible for, such as the Internal Periodic Review and module marking review, which are the main responsibilities of Registry Office, we engage external examiners in our process. (P1, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above reflection shows that external examining is not only used in the assessment process, it is also widely implemented in the Internal Periodic Review, new programme development, and module and programme review process. Engaging external examiners in various activities of the university's academic development has become the norms of the quality assurance practice, to ensure that third party opinions could be incorporated in the university quality assurance process and enhance the self-critical and self-regulation feature of the university's quality assurance system. Engaging external examiner in quality assurance practice presents different norms from that of engaging with government

authorities in Chinese quality assurance system. External examining encourages the norm of dialogue with external person who has expertise in the subject area, rather than just to follow the rules defined by government and do what they are required to do, which is the norms of the Chinese quality assurance system.

UK quality assurance system employs both internal and external review and scrutiny mechanism to ensure the quality of provision. Another participant reflects that the ‘three parties, two levels’ quality assurance system is the main feature to make XJTLU stand out. He gave the following comments regarding the internal and external quality assurance process.

*I think the one of the most significant features of XJTLU’s quality assurance is the internal and external examining process. When I gave presentations on quality assurance system to people from other Chinese universities, I told them that one of the key characteristics of our quality assurance system was the ‘three parties, two levels’ system. Three parties mean that the assessment process of every module is reviewed by an internal moderator, a University of Liverpool moderator and external examiner, in addition to the module examiner. The internal moderator is from the department, who ensures that the quality of assessment is comparable across the department; the University of Liverpool moderator’s role is to ensure the assessment is of the same standards to the University of Liverpool; and the external examiner’s responsibility is to make sure the assessment is comparable to other UK universities. This is a very good process which reviews the development of exam papers and marking moderation. After the assessment has been reviewed by the moderators and external examiners, the Examination Board would be organized and all people involved in the assessment process need to attend. (P2, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

This statement describes how the internal and external quality assurance processes

work together to form a self-regulation quality assurance system. The finding echoes the common trend on external quality monitoring identified by Harvey & Knight's (1996), which combined elements of self-assessment, peer evaluation and use of performance indicators. With the approval from the University of Liverpool, XJTLU appoints Chief External Examiner and external examiners for each module to review and monitor the quality of its provision, in addition to Chief University of Liverpool Moderator. Through inviting the Chief External Examiner, the Chief University of Liverpool Moderator and external examiners attend the Examination Board onsite. They can develop more contextual understanding of the quality assurance process and assessment arrangements at XJTLU and make constructive recommendations for continuous improvement of the university's education.

The participant further explained how the two-level examination boards worked to avoid subjectivity and individual judgment in the assessment process.

*The Examination Board has two levels, departmental and institutional levels. The departmental Examination Board is attended by module examiners, internal moderators, University of Liverpool moderator and external examiners, and the institutional Examination Board includes Chief External Examiner and University of Liverpool Chief Moderator. The whole process ensures that the final module marks are decided by the Examination Board rather than individuals. (P2, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

As stated in the above account, the module marks are reviewed by departmental and institutional Examination Board, with the input from external examiner and the University of Liverpool's moderator. With the rigorous external examining process, it is ensured that all students are treated equally and transparently, and their module marks and academic performance are not judged by an individual who may make the decision with personal judgements.



A participant gives the following comments on different practices of quality control of assessment in Chinese and UK systems.

*We have Board of Examiner for making assessment decisions. The results of student's assessment are decided through collective decisions made in formal meetings. No individual has the right to make decisions on assessment. However, there is no such system in Chinese assessment process, so that I would use the word liberal to describe Chinese assessment. In Chinese universities, academic staff are authorised to make the decisions on assessment. Although the Registry Office has records of the results, but there is no record of how each assessment component is marked. So that the integrity of marking is decided by academic staff's ethic awareness. (P1, Administrator in Leadership Role)*

The above statement provides an interesting example of different practice and norms of Chinese and UK assessment process. The participant used the word 'liberal' to describe the quality control of Chinese assessment. It on one hand shows that there is less monitoring of marking process, on the other hand, it also reveals that there might be more space for individual to influence the results of assessment. In the statement, the participant used a Chinese word *Juewu*, which can be literally translated as 'awareness' or 'conscientious', and is often used to describe people's ethical awareness or professional integrity. In Chinese culture, this word is frequently used by employers and media to highlight the importance of keep professional integrity. According to the above quote, it seems that the decision-making by individual academic staff somehow presents the flexibility and self-regulation of Chinese quality assurance system. From a different perspective, the statement of 'the integrity of marking is decided by academic staff's ethic awareness reveals that in the context that no specific mechanism and procedures of monitoring of assessment can be followed, there is more risk of individual judgement and influence on the results of assessment in Chinese quality

assurance system.

Another participant points out the underlying values of UK quality assurance system.

*I think UK quality assurance system is a system based on negotiation and communications. Normally, there is no prescriptive criteria which may fail a programme if the criteria are not met. Rather, it normally makes judgement on quality by taking consideration of external experts' comments. A programme is considered of good quality if the external examiner's comments are positive and the overall learning outcomes are achieved. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above quote reveals that the underlying value of the norms of engaging external examiners in quality assurance practice is to create dialogue between internal and external examiners, therefore to contribute to the enhancement of a programme, which is considered a key element of a self-regulation quality assurance system.

According to QAA (2015), quality assurance is the process for checking that the academic standards and quality of higher education provision meet agreed expectations. The UK Quality Code for higher education published by QAA set out the expectations that all UK higher education providers are required to meet with the ultimate goal to protect the interests of students, because the core value of the UK quality assurance system is student's experiences. According to the findings, one of most significant characteristics of UK quality assurance is the combination of self-evaluation and external evaluation, which according to Jackson (1997), can enhance the credibility of institutional and independent evaluation of the quality and standards of provision of institutions of higher education.

Findings from interview data illustrate that employing both internal and external reviews to ensure the quality of university's provision has become the norms of UK quality assurance system. Internally, they focus on the quality assurance framework developed by the university, with an emphasis on university's self-regulating ability to actively examine the level of the university's performance and the action to sustain the level of performance. External evaluation is conducted by quality assurance agency or professional bodies including institutional accreditation and professional accreditation.

The objective of establishing an institutional quality assurance framework is to ensure that the university is able to embed the quality assurance processes in its operation as norms and that are accepted and implemented by all shareholders including student, faculty, professional service staff, and external examiners. Through engaging external examiners in the quality assurance system, constructive dialogues could be created to guarantee the objectivity, fairness, and transparency of the operation of the quality assurance system, which forms the core values of UK quality assurance system.

#### *Continuous Enhancement of Quality and Standards*

Review of documents and interview data shows that rather than strictly requiring institutions to comply with prescriptive criteria for quality, the UK quality assurance system and XJTLU quality assurance system are more focused on continuous enhancement of quality after each review. For example, every quality review process of XJTLU provides opportunities for enhancement of quality and standards. At XJTLU, the quality assurance system is not an activity that ceases to be functional after the review visit of the Chinese educational authority, the University of Liverpool or other external bodies. A participant gave the following reflection regarding the continuous enhancement of the UK quality assurance system.

*The UK quality assurance system focuses on process, so that it is not a summative evaluation. The five-year cycle accreditation is supported by annual monitoring visit, and there will be action plan after each visit, so that the revisit is to check the progress against the action plan. This kind of evaluation does not make conclusion on whether the quality is satisfactory or not, rather, it requires annual improvement compared to previous year, and creates a cycle of continuous enhancement. This is a continuing and formative evaluation. At least this is how I see the UK quality assurance system. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

From the above statement, it shows that in the UK quality assurance system, no matter whether internal or external review will result in a comprehensive report with recommendations and commendations, based on which the department and university will develop action plans for improvement. The next review will build on the improvement to identify further areas for enhancement. The statement illustrates that the UK quality assurance system forms seamless loop for continuous improvement of quality and standards, and the norms of being active in enhancement of quality has been materialised in quality assurance practice. According to Bellingham (2008) citing NCIHE (1997), the core values of the UK higher education is to ‘enable personal development for the benefit of individuals and society’ (p. 268). The statement explains why student’s experiences have been placed at the heart of UK quality assurance system, and have influenced people’s beliefs of the quality of higher education.

When talking about difference of the staff behaviour in Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, a participant gave the following account:

*Our academic staff take teaching more seriously than those in Chinese universities. Within the 50 minutes’ teaching time, they focus on the module*

*content and never talk about things that are irrelevant to the subject. This is because most of our academic staff got their PhD degrees from UK and European countries, in which the quality assurance systems are fairly rigorous. The rigorous academic training of our academic staff is reflected in their teaching and influencing our students. (P2, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above statement demonstrates that in the UK quality assurance system, the norm of being actively engaged in enhancing quality has been embedded in academic staff's daily work. The values of ensuring student's learning experiences are widely recognised by academic staff so that they take active part in the quality assurance process and are self-regulatory and self-critical in the learning and teaching process.

A participant with rich experiences of quality assurance system in several different institutions of higher education in the UK gave the following comments on the UK quality assurance system:

*Quality assurance systems in the UK are quite different from the systems in other countries have I have exposed to. They focus more on the institution's ability to self-regulate, than they do on the outputs of the self-regulations. So, they are less concerned with what teaching is taking place in classroom, and how students have learned as they result of teaching. They are much more concerned with institution's ability to manage these things effectively. (P3)*

According to the above statement, the self-regulation logic of the UK quality assurance system emphasizes that institutions of higher education should evaluate their educational activities, and provide evidence to demonstrate that they are achieving their objectives and generally equal in quality to comparable universities. The participant's reflection echoes Jackson's (1997) claim that 'Self-

regulation is a complex, conscious, informed, considered and continuous process that presumes the presence and knowledge of intentions, standards or norms. It involves an acceptance of responsibility for individual and collective performance; a capacity to evaluate and reflect on performance; leadership, managerial and collegiate behaviours which identify and respond to the need to change; and a shared commitment to seeking to improve' (p.49).

In summary, the above analysis of findings shows that the UK quality assurance system is a self-regulation system. It encourages establishment of robust internal academic quality audit mechanisms which is a preferred model for universities as the academic freedom and university's autonomy is emphasized (Wang, 2014). According to Jackson (1997), a mature self-regulating institution should create a self-critical culture that encourages reflection and evaluation of all activities of the institution. The combination of robust and effective internal quality assurance mechanism which maintains and improves quality and standards should become the norms accepted by all members of the institution. Shore and Wright (2000) claim that self-regulation is the process to inculcate new norms and values to organisations therefore transform the behaviour of organisations.

The findings demonstrate that the UK quality assurance system reflects the self-regulation institutional logics. Self-regulation logic focuses on universities' accountability in managing its own quality control and enhancement process. Therefore, the values associated with self-regulation logic is accountability, transparency and reflexivity. Self-regulation logic helps universities to develop deeper understanding of structures and processes associated with a self-regulating quality assurance system, and to develop the quality assurance practice that is suitable to their own purposes and quality objectives. In such context, the norms of the UK quality assurance of higher education include self-assessment, peer evaluation, and use of performance indicators (Hoecht, 2006). Although the self-regulation of the UK quality assurance system is considered beneficial to improve

teaching quality and enhance students' experiences, the quality assurance process in UK universities is also criticized for being 'overly bureaucratic, had high opportunity cost for themselves and did address quality only at a rather superficial level' (Hoecht, 2006, p. 555).

Although it might be argued that self-regulation is not how UK quality assurance system appears to others, because institutional audits and Teaching Excellence Framework are also used as quality assurance approaches. The data collected for this study shows that at least in XJTLU's context, the self-regulation logic is evident from data analysis.

### **4.3 Manifestation of Multiple Logics at XJTLU and Their Relationship**

Influenced by the government-driven and self-regulation institutional logics, XJTLU's quality assurance has some unique features. The following sections draw together the manifestation of the government-driven and self-regulation logics in XJTLU's quality assurance practice and how they interact with each other.

#### **4.3.1 Manifestation of Multiple Logics**

XJTLU is eligible to award double degrees, the degree of XJTLU approved by the Chinese Notational Degree Committee and the UK degree from the University of Liverpool. In order to satisfy the quality standards of the Chinese and UK higher education systems, XJTLU has established a comprehensive quality assurance system that combines the norms of UK self-regulation and Chinese government-driven quality assurance systems. The quality assurance system of XJTLU integrated the quality standards and mechanisms of both the Chinese and UK higher education, incorporates external and internal approaches to evaluate the quality of the university's provision on six different dimensions, which presents the ethos of Total Quality Management identified by Hoecht (2006). This section discusses findings related to how multiple institutional logics are manifested at the

quality assurance practice at XJTLU, with the relationships of the logics to each other discussed in the next section.

The quality of XJTLU is monitored and controlled by several external bodies including the Chinese Ministry of Education, the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the University of Liverpool. The quality assurance system of XJTLU represents both the Chinese government-driven logic and UK self-regulation logic, which integrates the strength of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, and even surpasses the existing quality assurance systems of China and the UK. The notion that XJTLU's quality assurance system is stronger than some UK universities have been echoed by interview data. When talking about the management of assessment, a participant recalled:

*At the University's Board of Examination, we often heard comments from external examiners indicating that the quality assurance system and the management of assessment process was more robust than many UK universities they have worked with. (P1, Administrator in Manager Role)*

Because the quality assurance system originally developed at XJTLU was modelling the quality assurance framework of the University of Liverpool, in the University of Liverpool's first accreditation report, the accreditation panel recommended that 'in the medium term, XJTLU should review its quality assurance framework in the light of its own particular needs, adapting and enhancing it where appropriate, ensuring internal consistency, embedding it within the institution and encouraging ownership by all staff and students' (UoL, 2007). When the first cohort of undergraduates was about to graduate in 2010, XJTLU faced the strategic choice of how to embed the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems in its practice.

At the beginning, there was not much integration of the Chinese and UK quality



assurances at XJTLU. The Chinese and UK quality assurance systems were operated at XJTLU in parallel, and sometimes by different groups of people. One of the participants described the process of applying for the Chinese Degree Awarding Power as follows:

*Evaluation of documentation related to teaching and management, including teaching plans, is one of the core components of Chinese quality assurance system. When XJTLU was preparing documentation for the Chinese Degree Awarding Power, what we did was compiling documents and drafting reports based on the evaluation index released by Chinese National Degree Committee. It seemed that from the perspective of documentation, there was no direct link to the UK quality assurance requirements. Also, staff involved in the application were mostly Chinese staff, even the Head of Registry was not heavily involved because the different quality assurance systems and the language barrier. According to my own experience, Chinese quality assurance system is an administrative requirement implemented by the government, and because when the first 6 degree programmes were developed, they were mostly copying the programmes of Xi'an Jiaotong University, so that they were largely aligned to Chinese requirements. (P1, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above the statement shows that the practices related to the Chinese quality assurance requirements at XJTLU are mainly influenced by the government-driven logic. Wilkins & Huisman (2012) claim that the regulative, normative and cultural structures influence the transnational strategies of institutions of higher education. They indicate that because the institutional difference between China and exporting countries are high, so exporting institutions need to adapt to the local requirements. XJTLU's quality assurance practice related to the Chinese quality assurance requirements shows that the university has adapted to the local regulative and normative requirements.

The difficulty of integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems is also reflected in another interview:

*So, in a sense, you have dialogue about the different styles of programme design and enhancement of quality assurance. But actually at some point, it is very hard to hybrid the UK and Chinese models of the design of quality assurance system. UK quality assurance system has been brought into as the main internal driver for the quality assurance system at XJTLU. (P12, University Senior Leader)*

The above reflection reveals that the values and norms of the government-driven logic and self-regulation logic are very different. According to Thornton & Ocasio (2008), the notion of institutional logics refers to material practices, assumption, values, beliefs and rules by which individual produce and reproduce their material subsistence. The norms of government-driven logic of Chinese quality assurance are using external pressure for institutions to improve their quality, through rules set up by the government such as student-to-staff ration and library books, which may lead to acquiescence response by universities. However, the UK self-regulation logic values student experiences and the norms are employing internal and external examining system to create dialogues among institutions, accreditation bodies and external examiners, with the aim to ensure that a self-critical quality assurance system is developed by institutions. The self-regulation logic encourages staff and student's active participation and involvement in the quality assurance process. The different logics require institutions to respond to different internal and external institutional pressures and actively seek dialogue of the two logics.

When asked about the difference of China and UK quality assurance systems, a participant gave the following comments:

*The principles of the systems are fundamentally different. There is inevitable tension between them. I think surely during the time I was at XJTLU; we were still operating two systems in parallel. We are assuring quality in a different way in the UK than that of China. The fundamental university difference is that the autonomous status of university, which is the arrangements in the UK, which can award its own degree. UK universities assurance their own quality to the QAA, and their competence to do that. It is different from the system in China, where the government is awarding the degree and testing student and staff to assure the quality. (P3, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above statement shows that to a certain extent the government-driven and self-regulation logics are contradictory and independent on each other. Edwards & Delbridge (2011) claim that different logics have different implications for roles, skills, competence, practice, protocols and performance criteria. The findings presented in the previous sections support this claim, because the government-driven logic of the Chinese quality assurance system has different norms, practice, protocols and performance criteria from that of the self-regulation logic. Because the two logics are so different, it makes sense that the participant describes the relationship of the government-driven and self-regulation logics as incompatible and there is inevitable tension between them.

The growth of quality assurance system at XJTLU is driven by the growth of the university, as it creates new departments, degree programmes and recruits new staff. XJTLU has gradually developed its own quality assurance system that is able to evaluate and monitor quality from national, institutional, departmental, programme, and module levels and satisfy external accreditation bodies. The government-driven and self-regulation logics are manifested in XJTLU's quality assurance practice.

On national level, XJTLU has been reviewed both by the Chinese and UK quality

assurance authority, which are the Chinese educational authority and UK Quality Assurance Agency. The national level quality evaluation by the Chinese government is mainly reflected in the government's approvals of Chinese Degree Awarding Power, new programmes, and undergraduate student recruitment quota. Chinese Ministry of Education also conducts evaluation of undergraduate teaching as a quality control process. The UK national level quality evaluation takes the form of QAA visit. In 2012, a QAA Panel visited XJTLU as part of their second review of higher education delivery. The visit focused on the link between XJTLU and the University of Liverpool and the quality assurance system at XJTLU.

After the visit, QAA published a report on the visit. The following excerpt from the report shows QAA's values on the quality of transnational education.

*By working through institutions that understand the rules and procedures (first Xi'an Jiaotong University and later XJTLU), Liverpool has been able to ensure that XJTLU students receiving its awards can be confident that these are recognised by the relevant Chinese authorities. ...Against the background of XJTLU's continuing rapid expansion, Liverpool is recommended to undertake a review of the processes used to monitor the accreditation of XJTLU such that these can remain effective, while not placing an excessive strain on its capacity to operate them. Liverpool will wish to maximise the extent to which XJTLU's own quality assurance processes are embedded in that institution and can be relied upon to provide a strong foundation for Liverpool's ongoing accreditation of XJTLU. (QAA, 2012)*

The above excerpt presents the self-regulation logic of the UK quality assurance system, and highlights the norms of the UK quality assurance practice. The report reminds XJTLU to embed quality assurance in its operation, and to develop its own self-regulation quality assurance system. The recommendation asking XJTLU pay more attention to external examining process reflects that QAA would

like to see the norms of UK quality assurance system to be materialised through embedding external examining process to XJTLU's quality assurance practice. The QAA's recommendation echoes Pache & Santos's (2010) claim that actors with different positions interpret, give meaning and represent their own beliefs and normative criteria. QAA as the UK quality authority represents the normative criteria and beliefs of the logic of UK quality assurance system, therefore, it encourages XJTLU to embed the external examining process to the University's quality practice.

The internal quality assurance system established at XJTLU is manifested on institutional, departmental, programme and module levels (Table 7), supported by an academic committee structure. The internal quality assurance system of XJTLU is designed not only to evaluate and monitor the quality of teaching, but also to monitor student's academic progress and to assess student's academic performance and achievement. XJTLU's *Policy on Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching* (XJTLU, 2010) has identified key criteria by which XJTLU can measure its performance as an institution committed to the maintenance of high standards. The criteria have been translated to the university's various systems and processes to ensure that the quality assurance is embedded to different levels of operation. As stated in the Policy, the achievement of academic excellence depends on people, policies and procedures and resources, rather than simply follows the instructions from the government.

*The achievement of excellence depends upon the ability and commitment of its staff and students, but it depends, too, on the setting of appropriate standards, the existence of policies, procedures and resources to ensure that these standards are met and the development of mechanisms to monitor the achievement of standards and to enhance quality. (XJTLU, 2010)*

The above excerpt shows that the norms of the Chinese and UK quality assurance

have been materialised in XJTLU's practice, through integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance approaches in the university's quality assurance framework. However, since the values of the Chinese and UK higher education and quality assurance systems are different, there are also tensions. Billing (2004) claims that cultural differences influence the pattern of national quality assurance frameworks. Some of the tensions are caused by the different power distances of the UK and Chinese quality assurance systems. The power distance of the UK quality assurance system is low, so that the norms of UK quality assurance system is dialogue with others and coordination through mutual agreement. The power distance of the Chinese quality assurance system is high so that the quality assurance pattern is direct supervision by the government.

A participant described the tension caused by cultural differences:

*Chinese students are most passive learners and they expect to get more attention from teachers even though they go to universities. However, at XJTLU, our staff treat students as adults and expect students to deal with their own problems unless they need academic advices. This has caused misunderstanding by some students, who think the quality of XJTLU's education is not as good as some traditional Chinese universities. (P4, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above reflection echoes Pyvis' (2011) claim that transnational education should be culturally sensitive and how people in different cultural contexts learn should be considered when evaluating the academic quality of transnational education. The norms of passivity of the Chinese education and quality assurance system has influenced student's learning style. The implications stem beyond quality assurance issues to pervade an organisation as a whole. Therefore, joint-venture universities should consider how to help students move from the role as passive learners to becoming active learners.

**Table 7: Quality Assurance Process at XJTLU (XJTLU, 2015)**

Institutional Level	
Process	Description
Five-year Reaccreditation by the University of Liverpool	In-depth institutional review of the operation of XJTLU's learning and teaching to determine the appropriateness of awarding the degree of the University of Liverpool.
Annual Monitoring Visit by the University of Liverpool	Annual monitoring visit to review the progress of arrangements in teaching, management and administration against the action plan of reaccreditation.
Student Engagement	Student engagement is an important part of University's quality assurance framework. Student's engagement is presented in membership of academic committees, participate in departmental Internal Periodic Review, Annual Programme Review, and all kinds of student experience questionnaires.
Chief External Examiner & Chief University of Liverpool Moderator	Chief External Examiner gives overall assurance to the University of Liverpool of the quality and standards of the taught programmes delivered at XJTLU, which lead to a University of Liverpool award; Chief University of Liverpool Moderator work alongside Chief External Examiner to ensure the overall quality and standards for XJTLU's taught programmes.
Departmental Level	
Internal Periodic Reviews	A four-year cycle review of overall student experience and the standards and relevance of taught and research degree provision of the academic department.
Peer Review	Academic staff is encouraged to review the lectures of their peers to provide feedback on their teaching and enhance the quality of teaching.
Programme Level	
Annual Programme Review	All degree programmes are required to be reviewed on annual basis to evaluate the quality of provision and student experience. The purpose of the review is to identify areas for improvement and highlight good practice and issues.
Programme Validation / Modification	The University of Liverpool validates XJTLU's new programmes leading to its awards, and modifications to existing programmes also need to go through a number of internal and external approval process.
Professional Accreditation	Accreditation by external professional bodies is another way to ensure the quality of programmes. More than a dozen of degree programmes at XJTLU have been accredited by relevant external professional bodies.
Module Level	
Module Creation / Modification	Creation and modifications of modules need to go through internal procedures to ensure the quality of modules.
External Examiner	The external examining system assist the university to monitor the standards of its awards are comparable with those similar subjects in other UK universities. Each module has an external examiner to ensure the assessment process is fairly operated.

To implement institutional quality assurance procedures, a robust academic committee structure (Table 8) has been developed at XJTLU. The Academic Board has overall responsibility for the operation of quality assurance. It is the key decision-making and consultative forum and is chaired by the Executive President or a nominated deputy, conventionally the Vice President (Academic

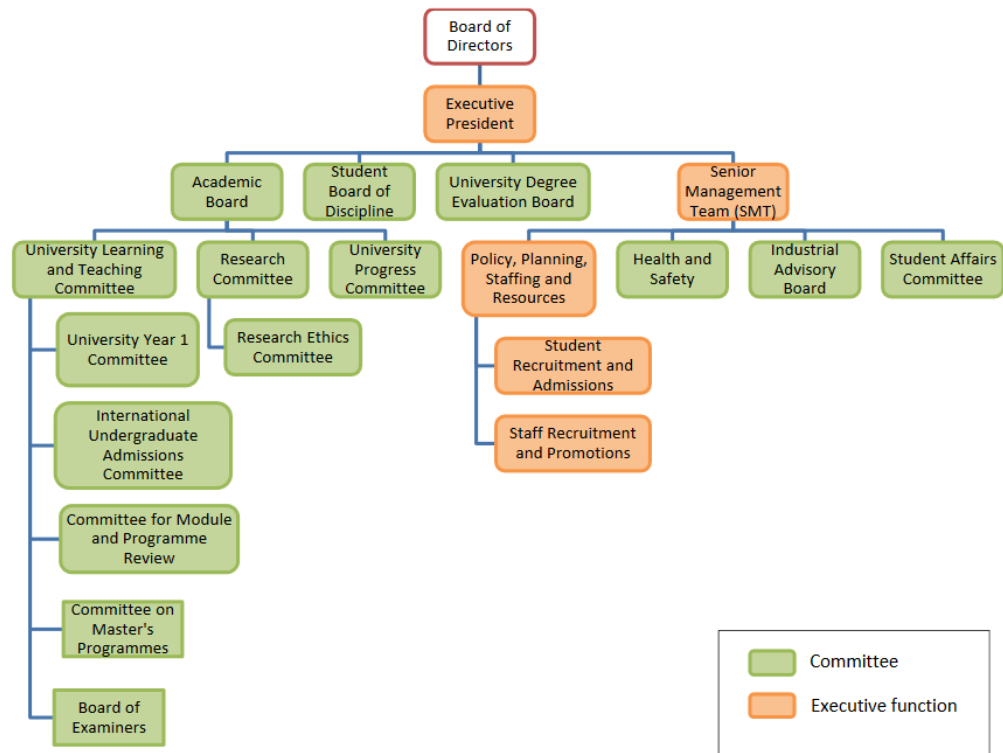
Affairs). Decisions and recommendations of the University Learning and Teaching Committee, comprising representatives of each academic department and teaching centre, are reported to the Academic Board. Each academic department has its own Learning and Teaching Committee. Each department has a Board of Examiners, comprising all members of the teaching staff. Recommendations from the Departmental Module Review Boards and Boards of Examiners are reported to the University Progress Committee and the University Degree Awarding Committee. The development and empowerment of academic committees are not only critical to ensure that the quality assurance procedures are embedded in departmental operations, but also safeguard that decisions are made collectively by a group of experts rather than individuals. As one of the interviewees indicated that:

*Our quality assurance system actually also ensures the quality of decision making, because quality is not only about modules, but also about our decision-making process. (P11, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above statement shows that the quality assurance system developed at XJTLU helps the university to make collective response to the pressures from government-driven and self-regulation logics. Pache & Santos (2010) claim that actors in an organisation represent and give voice to institutional logics. The representatives at various academic committees include both Chinese and expats staff members, which ensures actors with different institutional logics can express their views and participate in key university decisions. The decision-making through academic committees helps XJTLU respond to the compliance requirements of the government-driven logic, as well as creating dialogue with external examiners which is the norm of self-regulation logic.

***Table 8: XJTLU Committee Structure (XJTLU, 2015)***





In summary, the above findings show how the government-driven and self-regulation logics manifest in XJTLU's quality assurance practice. Greenwood et. al (2011) claim that the institutional complexity of an organisation is fundamentally shaped by the structure of the organisational fields within which it is located, because at field level the overarching sets of meaning and normative criteria become encoded to logics. These logics are then manifested in rituals, practices and day-to-day behaviour. The joint-venture university field is influenced by the logics associated with Chinese and other countries' quality assurance systems, so the practices, normative criteria and behaviour are manifest in organisations in the fields. Although the logics associated with the exporting countries' quality assurance system may be different, joint-venture universities in China, especially those awarding double degrees also face certain degree of institutional complexity.

#### 4.3.2 Relationship of Government-driven and Self-Regulation Logics

Through the examination of various approaches to higher education accountability, Brown (2017) claims that ‘all organisations are essentially hybrids, subject to demands of multiple logics (p. 140), and ‘it is difficult to imagine organisations that are not exposed to influences stemming from different logics’ (p. 140). Coexistence of multiple institutional logics may cause conflicts, but in some cases, as Besharov & Smith (2014) indicate that in aligned organisations, in which high centrality has been achieved and multiple instructional logics are presented in the organisation’s mission and strategy, there will be less conflicts. Drawing on the types of logic multiplicity within organisation proposed by Besharov & Smith (2014), which include contested, aligned, estranged and dominant, the relationship of the government-driven and self-regulation logic of quality assurance system at XJTLU have been classified into three categories: integrated, dominant, and conflict. The following sections will present the relationship of the government-driven and self-regulation logics when they are manifested in XJTLU’s quality assurance system.

Findings from the interview data show that the two institutional logics are integrated in most circumstances, but in some specific circumstances, they are either dominant by the self-regulation logic or conflict. The relationships of the two logics are illustrated as follows.

### *Integrated*

The integration of the government-driven and self-regulation logics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems is decided by the fact that XJTLU awards double degrees.

A participant who had conducted some comparative studies on the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems gives the following summary about the two systems’ differences in review methods, outcomes and focus.

*UK quality assurance evaluation is not an overall evaluation of the operation of an institution, rather than assessment of whether the institution has established a self-regulation quality assurance system. Compared to the UK quality assurance system, Chinese quality assurance is a conclusive evaluation. For example, the undergraduate teaching evaluation is a five-year cycle and the Degree Awarding Power is a four-year cycle, but there is no visit or evaluation during these years. The evaluation panel picks a particular date to visit, and gives a conclusion after the visit. The outcomes of the evaluation visits decide funding allocation and pass or not pass. On the contrary, UK assessment of quality does not make decision based on a single visit, rather than continuing follow up progress. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above quote shows that the norms and beliefs associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems are different. According to Greenwood et al. (2011), the norms of logics can be imported to an organisation by actors and therefore influence the organisation's response to multiple logics. Because the norms of government-driven and self-regulation logics are so different, in order to award double degree to students, the two institutional logics at XJTLU are integrated to make sure that both the Chinese and UK's quality standards are achieved.

The participant continued to explain how the different logics influence actors' behaviours.

*One of my colleagues told me that the University of Liverpool has never rejected any of XJTLU's new programmes, or given a not pass to XJTLU. When there are some critical problems, they draw XJTLU's attention to these problems and ask the university to respond or address them. So that Chinese quality assurance is conclusive and summative, and that of the UK's is process-based and formative. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The reflection demonstrates that under the self-regulation logic, the organisation's capacity to evaluate and reflect on performance are highlighted, rather than giving summative decision. It relies on the organisation to identify change and seek improvement actively.

Formative, summative and developmental are the three types of educational evaluation identified by Grayson (2012). The norms associated with formative evaluation emphasizes active reflection on problems and seeking improvements. The norms of the UK quality evaluation focuses on improvement through constructive feedback on programmes and students, therefore, is more likely to be classified as formative evaluation. Summative evaluation encourages the norms of passivity through measurement of inputs and outcomes. But there is no monitoring in between, so that organisations tend to passively adopt acquiescence behaviour pattern. This analysis echoes participant P9 statement that the Chinese government approves the new programme, and then evaluates and decides its appropriateness for awarding degree after four years, without any evaluation in between, so that the judgement made based on the comparison of input and outcomes, which pertains to summative evaluation.

The norms of activity and passivity have been reflected in the interview with an administrator in manager role:

*The Chinese quality assurance system focused on outcomes whereas the UK quality assurance system focused on process. The different focuses lead to the results that many Chinese universities make preparations and take actions only to pass the quality evaluation, so that the evaluation leads to passive actions. However, in the UK quality assurance system, which is dominant in XJTLU's quality practice, quality evaluation is series of spontaneous, continuous and active actions. So that the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems are very different. (P8, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above statement shows that the government-driven logic is associated with the norms of passivity, under which institutions passively make preparations to pass the evaluation. On the contrary, the norms of self-regulation logic are active and spontaneous, which leads institutions to take active actions to ensure quality. Although the government-driven and self-regulation logics have different norms manifested at XJTLU, the norms are presented in parallel in the university's quality assurance practice. The values of government-driven quality assurance are to assess compliance with government standards and regulations, because the outcomes of the university quality evaluation provide evidence for allocation of government funding, whereas the values of the self-regulation quality assurance system are to enhance student's learning experience. In XJTLU's quality assurance practice, efforts have been made to ensure compliance with both the Chinese government criteria and regulations, and to develop a self-regulation quality assurance framework for internal quality control.

*The Chinese Degree Awarding Power approval adds an extra layer of quality monitoring to our quality assurance system. I think it should be said as well, that the success of the Chinese Degree Awarding Power application, is due to everybody is saying from the same page, the English tutors, teaching staff for Chinese ideology and politics modules and subject modules are all working together. (P12, University Senior Leader)*

The above reflection shows that although the norms of government-driven logic and self-regulation logic quality assurance systems are different, it is possible to integrate the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems as two layers of the internal quality assurance practice at one university, if staff develop the same understanding of the norms of the two logics, and make collective efforts to respond to pressures from multiple logics. The quality assurance practice at XJTLU combines the norms and values of government-driven and self-regulation logics, which enables XJTLU to meet the requirements of the Chinese and UK

quality assurance systems. This finding is aligned with Upton & Warshaw's (2017) claim that logics can be combined, which are also called hybrid logics.

Besharov & Smith define 'compatibility as the extent to which the instantiations of logics imply consistent and reinforcing organisational actions' (2014, p. 367), so the goals of the organisation is more important than the means to achieve the goals. Although the government-driven and self-regulation logics have different values and norms, XJTLU's ultimate goal is to award both Chinese and UK degrees to its graduates, as stated in the Reaccreditation Report that 'Students valued the opportunity to gain both a Chinese and UK award' (the University of Liverpool, 2010, p. 3). This goal also reflects the core values and beliefs of the university, which is to combine the strengths of the UK and Chinese higher education system. So the government-driven and self-regulation logics have been integrated, and with the collective efforts of staff of the university, the organisational goals can be achievement. This finding also echoes Besharov & Smith's (2014) claim that the goals of organisation are difficult to challenge or modify, because it is evaluated by the logic of appropriateness.

#### *A Dominant Self-regulation Logic*

Besharov & Smith (2014) indicate that in organisations there can be situation in which a prevailing logic is dominant and the other logics are subsidiary and do not have much influence on organisational functioning. The quality assurance system at XJTLU clearly demonstrates self-regulation logic's influences on its objective, strategy, review methods and organisation member's behaviour. A participant gave the following description of how the UK quality assurance system was established.

*One thing which is quite obvious is that when XJTLU was set up, the UK quality assurance system at the university was not as strict as it could be, which is the nature of setting up a new university. And so that has actually*

*become stricter. Policies and the procedures were written down which were not necessary have been there before and are continually changing. The quality assurance system at the university probably depends on where the next Vice President for Academic Affairs comes from. If they come from Liverpool, they would represent Liverpool. (P7, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above reflection shows that the framework of XJTLU's quality assurance was largely developed based on that of the University of Liverpool. The university has established its own new programme approval process, internal periodic review and external examining system based on the norms of the self-regulation logic. XJTLU's quality assurance system reflects the core values of UK quality assurance system, presenting the characteristics such as focus on student's engagement. It also reflects the norms of external evaluation and examining. Continuous enhancement of quality has been materialised in XJTLU's practice. The domination of self-regulation logic has significant influences on organisational members' values and behaviour. The following quote from interview shows how the core values of enhancing student's experience of the UK self-regulation logic is materialised in XJTLU's operation.

*This year is the first time we have the Learning & Teaching Assessment Strategy developed. There are six aspects....and the third one is about enhancing student's experience. This is something very important. What we put down there is that we emphasize every department have to exercise open-office hour policy. So to make sure that every week, staff should have fixed hours to meet with students without any appointments. So to provide help and support to students. (P11, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above statement shows that student's experience is one of the core values at XJTLU and is reflected in the university's strategy. Wang (2014) indicates that student's engagement is an area that has not been touched by the Chinese quality

assurance system. But at XJTLU, student's engagement is highlighted not only in the self-evaluation report for the accreditation and annual monitoring visit, but also in the university's operation. The quality assurance process at XJTLU is not aimed at satisfying the Chinese and UK quality review panels as a one-off practice, it has become norms that are embedded in every stage of a degree programme's development and delivery. It is reflected in quality assurance procedures and is supported by the university's vision and mission and operation system.

One of the participants indicated that the university is designed to provide high-quality education to students and the development of the vision and mission, the operation system and the organisational culture are catered for that goal.

*As I have mentioned that the base for the quality is designing, understanding about demands, direction, and developing business model that can survive in long-term. That means you need to have a sustainable business model, and then you should have the organisational structure, the development of culture and the support system. And then in the system, staff can work towards the vision and mission, and future direction. So, the whole system secures the quality, if there is no clear design of the system, and vision and mission, it is difficult to have high quality education. (P10, University Senior Leader)*

The above reflection reveals that quality assurance system is not only about policies and procedures, but also about adopting the values, beliefs and structures that support the delivery of high quality education. The self-regulation logic values student's experience and encourages the norms of collective decision-making and active dialogue. At XJTLU, academic decisions such as modifications to modules or programme, student's exam results and progression, and creation of new programmes or academic departments are not decided by an individual, all decisions are made through collective dialogues at academic committees. Therefore, dominated by the self-regulation logic, XJTLU places more emphasis



on consistency and transparency of decision-making, and the norms of collective decision-making has been materialised through the committee structure.

Compared to the practice in Chinese universities, according to Wang (2014), the outcome of undergraduate teaching evaluation not only affects the funding allocated to university, but also the career development of university leaders. Greenwood et al. (2011) claim that organisation decisions are not only decided by actors, but also by those with powers. Since the outcome of the Chinese quality assurance evaluation also decides the career path of university leaders, it is more likely that the quality assurance of Chinese universities is dominant by the government-driven logic so that the norms of acquiescence and passivity are more evident.

A participant reflected that the domination of the self-regulation logic at XJTLU has caused reluctance in dealing with Chinese quality projects.

*Some of the Chinese quality projects such as national or provincial key subject are not popular among our academic staff. The application of these projects requires a lot of paperwork, and the evaluation criteria are quite different from our internal standards. So we have to persuade some academic departments to apply for these projects. (P6, Administrator)*

The above statement shows that because the self-regulation logic is dominant in XJTLU's quality assurance practice, academic staff are passive in relation to the government requirements, despite the fact that they are active in activities relating to the University of Liverpool's accreditation. This constitutes a reconciliation of sorts between the two logics, with one dominant in a certain sense as far as activity is concerned, but the other nonetheless is dominant in its own way and in its own sphere. The finding is aligned with Greenwood et al.'s (2011) claim that the degree of the specificity of an institution influences the organisation's discretion, and the

more specific of the goals and principles of a logic, it is more likely to dominant norms of behaviour.

### Conflicted

The conflict of the government-driven and self-regulation logics of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems is instantiated in their different values and norms. In XJTLU quality assurance practice, the different values and norms of the two logics have caused conflicts in educational philosophy, programme design and student progression rules.

A participant commented on the fundamental differences of the values and philosophies of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems.

*In terms of Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, there are tensions. The values and philosophy of Chinese and UK quality assurance system are different, so that it is difficult to integrate the two systems. So that I think this is a value and philosophy issue. If we want to integrate the comparative advantages of the two systems into one system, we need to have an ideology of education which is inclusive. Because we are running the university in Chinese context, and Chinese culture is inclusive and Chinese people are tolerating to difference. I think good understanding of Chinese and western cultures help us to look at tension in different angle and help us to find out a way to integrate the different systems. (P10, University Senior Leader)*

The above reflection reveals that the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems are fundamentally different in terms of values and philosophies. As illustrated by the findings in the previous sections that the core values of the self-regulation logic is enhancing student experiences. However, the core value of government-driven logic is to ensure universities produce graduates that serve the development of the Chinese economy and society, which are ‘socialism successors’. So it is

inevitable that there might be tensions caused by the two logics. Greenwood et al. (2011) point out that the differences of logics are presented through implications for roles, practice, protocols and performance criteria. However, their claim neglects the importance of cultural dimension, which has been talked about by the participant. He indicated that tension caused by different values and ideologies of the government-driven and self-regulation logics can be resolved through the inclusive Chinese cultures and the good understanding of the Chinese and western culture. The claim echoes Pyvis's (2011) view that the transference of the quality of transnational education has to be achieved through cultural sensitivity.

The following interview data reveals some of the conflicts are caused by different norms of government-driven and self-regulation logics. Participant P6 gives the following description of the conflicts:

*When we are applying for new programme to Ministry of Education, we need to ensure our programme title is aligned with the published national programme title catalogue, and also ensure our curriculum has included all core modules required in national degree programme benchmark. However, the University of Liverpool does not have such kind of prescriptive requirements, so that sometimes our new programme could not get approval from the Ministry of Education. We have to modify the programme according to Chinese requirements and get approval from the University of Liverpool again. (P6, Administrator)*

Analysis of the above quote reveals that the norms of government-driven logic are acquiescence with government-defined criteria and passivity. However, the norms of self-regulation logic are dialogue with external examiners and collective decision making. The different norms of the two logics have led to conflicts of different requirements for new programme. So tension has been created by the norms associated with the government-driven and self-regulation logics. Because

XJTLU is awarding double degrees, to resolve the tension, XJTLU has to adopt the norms of acquiescence as the response to the conflicting logics, through making changes to the new programme title and curriculum according to government requirements in order to get Ministry of Education's approval.

Another conflict of the two institutional logics is caused by the different norms and educational philosophies on assessment and learning. In Chinese universities, there are no requirements for students' progression. Students can progress to the next year of study even though they have not passed the re-sit exam, they can make up all the failed modules at the end of Year 4. However, at XJTLU, students have to pass one year in order to progress to the next year of study. The academic progression rules and how they are enacted are subject to quality assurance processes. Chinese education quality assurance focuses on outcome, as indicated by Wang (2014) that current Chinese evaluation exercises entirely focus on outcomes of teaching and research. As long as the outcome is positive, the process is not so important. However, the UK quality assurance system emphasizes more on process. Every step counts to the final result. If a student cannot pass one year, that means there are some core knowledge the student has not obtained which will affect the understanding of next year's advanced knowledge.

A participant explained that the conflict is also influenced by Chinese cultural context.

*Part of the tension is because we are a Chinese university, and therefore that parents expect us to behave like Chinese universities. Although we are Chinese university but we follow UK system so that we don't speak parents etc. And there is massive tension around that. So that I think that is an area with tension. My personal feel is that in this case we should probably respect the parents more. Because we are a Chinese university, that's one reason. Secondly, we are an expensive Chinese university, the investment the family*

*has put in students coming here probably means why should listen to them more. I am not saying we should change our standards, but I do think we should do a bit more to bring things together. (P7, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

According to the above statement, Chinese parents are expecting the norms of Chinese quality assurance system to be applied to student's progression because XJTLU is a joint-venture university in China. So they were shocked when they knew that XJTLU was dominant by the UK quality assurance system and strict progression rules were important norms of the system. Therefore, XJTLU has been complained by students and parents when failed students have to repeat a year. They think repeat a year is a big waste of student's time and they will lose face to their friends and relatives. According to the participant that the tension may be reduced if more attention can be paid to cultural differences.

The participant also explained that the cultural difference may also influence student's performance as they are studying in second language.

*There are definitely tension around assessment, failing student's progression. To me, I also think we follow the UK system too closely. Although we claim that our educational philosophy is ground-breaking, but we follow very closely the UK system, which means you don't progress if you fail. To me, I think we should be aware that it is much more difficult to study in a second language, or your third language in some case, if you have never done it before. Maybe students do take longer to adapt to various things so we should think about having people met all the credits at the end of four years rather than have the credits to progress at the end of each year, from my perspective. I don't think we took account of studying in a second language and studying in an alien system as much as we can do. That working in different system is even harder than working in a different language. And that is not for our*

*students, but also for our staff who come from a different system. (P7, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

The above statement echoes Sharp's (2017) claims that quality assurance of transnational education has to be context-dependent, because cultural differences may lead to different learning preferences and cognitive styles so more attention should be paid to cultural difference, while implementing unified academic standards at importing and exporting institutions.

The findings of the relationship between government-driven and self-regulation logics show that although the values and norms associated with the two logics are different, which are presented through different practices, protocols and performance criteria (Greenwood et al., 2011). The two logics have been integrated at XJTLU's quality assurance practice through creating two subunits to deal with the government-driven and self-regulation logics, as well as encouraging dialogues of the two subunits and different practices. The findings also show that XJTLU's quality assurance system is dominated by self-regulation logic of the UK quality assurance system, but tensions caused by the conflicting logics in values, norms and practices have been identified. Additionally, the findings also reveal that cultural dimension should be considered when facing tensions of conflicting logics, because cultural context may influence the values of organisational members therefore have impact on organisation's response to multiple institutional logics.

Bellingham points out that 'Institutions should be encouraged to devise innovative means of ensuring and enhancing quality, which at times might necessitate experimentation in teaching and learning' (2008, p. 268). The following section will present how XJTLU employs various strategies to respond to pressure from the government-driven and self-regulation logics.

#### **4.4 Strategies for Organisational Response to Multiple Institutional Logics**

Greenwood et al. (2010) claims that ‘organisational responses to their contexts are unlikely to be uniform’ (p. 521). Although operation under two different logics caused some conflicts and uncertainties for members in the organisation, analysis of data shows that XJTLU has developed strategies to respond to the government-driven and self-regulation logics. Through thematic analysis, strategies adopted by XJTLU to respond to conflicts of multiple institutional logics have been identified. The following sections will explain the three strategies and provide examples for each strategy.

##### **4.4.1 Optimising Organisational Structure**

Review of Self-evaluation Document (XJTLU, 2010) for the Re-accreditation by the University of Liverpool reveals that some structural changes have been made to deal with multiple logics of XJTLU’s quality assurance practice. When XJTLU was established, the work related to quality assurance was undertaken by the Registry, an office established to manage student record, timetabling, assessment and other academic services. In 2010, a designated office called ‘Programme Management and Quality Assurance Office (PMQA)’ was established as a separate unit of professional service. The main responsibilities of the office are to safeguard the standards and quality of programme provision and support the enhancement of student experiences. The PMQA Office is staffed with professionals with work experiences in Chinese and western universities to ensure that they could respond to the demands of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems effectively.

Because the government-driven and self-regulation logics have different impacts on how to interpret organisational reality (Thornton, 2004), at the beginning of 2018, the PMQA Office was restructured to two separate teams, which are the Chinese QA Team and UK QA Team. The Chinese QA Team is responsible for new undergraduate programme applications, new postgraduate programme

recognition, the Ministry of Education projects and Chinese government quality evaluations. The UK QA Team is responsible for the University of Liverpool's reaccreditation and Annual Monitoring Visits, Internal Periodic Review, Annual Programme Review, new programme validation, professional accreditation, programme and module review and academic regulations and committees. The organisational restructure enabled staff in PMQA Office to focus on specific area which is only influenced by one logic, therefore can greatly improve work efficiency. A participant reflected why the restructuring took place.

*We used to work together on work related to quality assurance, no matter whether it is Chinese or UK related. The work allocation was done by our line manager. This year, our new line manager decided that separating the office to two teams which could enable focus on different demands of Chinese and UK quality assurance, and the efficiency can be improved. (P6, Administrator)*

The above statement shows that XJTLU has changed the structure as a response to tensions caused by multiple institutional logics. At first, XJTLU established a dedicated unit within the university to deal with the different norms of Chinese and UK quality assurance process, because the practices associated with the government-driven and self-regulation logics are diverse and complicated. Therefore, the PMQA Office was established to deal with different norms of multiple logics and develop relevant practices to ensure the demands from both logics are addressed. Later, because the line manager realized that the pressures from government-driven and self-regulation logics cannot be well-handled because the values and norms are so different. Therefore, separate subunits, the Chinese QA Team and UK QA Team, have been established to deal with the government-driven and self-regulation logics in order to achieve higher efficiency.

Pache & Santos (2010) claim that actors of different structural positions represent



different logics and they interpret, give meaning and represent their own beliefs and normative criteria. With the new organisational structure, the Chinese QA Team mainly represents the government-driven logic which values compliance with government-defined criteria. Staff in the Chinese QA Team are actors that interpret the government-driven logic and materialise the government quality criteria to daily quality assurance practice. Because the government-driven logic is dominant in this subunit, the norms of acquiescence are emphasized, so for this team, compliance with government regulations and criteria, and maintaining a friendly relationship with relevant government authorities have become materialised practice.

The UK QA Team is driven by the self-regulation logic which values student experiences and the norms of dialogue and collective decision-making is materialised through external examining process and committee structure. Actors in the team present the self-regulation logic through active involvement in the quality assurance practice with the aim to continuously enhance the quality standards. The series of structural changes in PMQA reflected that XJTLU has optimised its organisational structure to respond to the conflicts caused by the two institutional logics, in order to achieve the institutional goal of providing high quality assurance international education to students.

The findings are consistent with Greenwood et al. (2011), who claim that the structurally differentiated hybrid functions by having separate subunits deal with different logics is an organisational response to multiple logics, but it will eventually partition an organisation into different ‘mindset, normative orders, practice and process’ (p. 354). Hybrid structural arrangements are often found in universities because they need to balance numerous incompatible influences therefore are subject to demands of multiple logics (Schildt & Perkmann, 2016). Although the subunits of the Chinese and UK QA Teams can help XJTLU respond to the pressure from the government-driven and self-regulation logics, there is also

potential risk that the two units may create silos within the university and form different mindset and normative orders.

Participant P6 explained how the risk was managed through collaboration between the two subunits.

*The two teams have to work together on some occasions. For example, Chinese Ministry of Education started to conduct new undergraduate programme evaluation since 2016. The evaluation focuses on modifications to the programme since it was approved. So when the UK QA Team conducting the programme review and modification, they would consult with Chinese QA Team to make sure that all core modules required by the Ministry of Education are not removed or changed. (P6)*

The above reflection shows that although the Chinese and UK QA Teams are driven by different logics, and are operating in different normative criteria and practices, they collaborate with each other during the annual programme review, which is a key process of the UK quality assurance, to ensure that all core modules required by the Chinese Ministry of Education are not removed or changed. Wood & Gray (1991) claims that collaboration refers to ‘a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures to act on issues related to that domain’ (p. 146). Although the two subunits are dominant by government-driven and self-regulation logics respectively, when facing the problem of how to satisfy the requirements of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, they collaborate with each other using the norms of active dialogues of the self-regulation logics to meet the demands of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems.

Additionally, a norm of dialogue with external examiners of the self-regulation logic also influences the response to government-driven logic. Although the

Chinese government uses uniform criteria in the National Subject Review of Social Science and Humanity, instead of adopting the acquiescence response strategy, XJTLU employs the norm of dialogue of the self-regulation logic, and explains the educational philosophy and learning outcomes to the review panel, which has been accepted and created flexibilities in dealing with government-driven logic. This is aligned with Schildt & Perkmann's (2016) claim that specific organisational configurations can permit the co-existence of organisational principles and practices associated with different logics.

This finding is contradictory to Ferlie et al.'s (2005, P. 129) claim that structural differentiation may cause boundaries within organisation and may well cause lack of cooperation. In this circumstance, collaborative relationships between the subunits are essential. In their research on managing rivalry of competing institutional logics, Reay & Hinings (2009) claim that different groups can work together to accomplish particular tasks for mutual goals but still maintain their independence and adherence to different logics. This argument is exemplified by actors from the two subunits of XJTLU work together to accomplish particular task such as the undergraduate programme evaluation to ensure the organisational goal is achieved. When they are collaborating on the same project, they can maintain their values and normative, as long as the project is completed successfully.

The above findings show that in order to deal with the tensions from the government-driven and self-regulation logics, XJTLU has optimised the organisational structure to create two subunits to deal with the normative criteria and practices associated with different logics.

#### **4.4.2 Being Innovative in Criteria Interpretation and Programme Design**

In order to cope with the different norms associated with the government-driven and self-regulation logics, innovative interpretation of criteria has been adopted

by XJTLU. When reflecting on how XJTLU addressed the gap of the Chinese Ministry of Education's subject review of social, a participant introduced the following practice:

*The subject review has a set of pre-set criteria. In this sense, Chinese universities have much less freedom and flexibility. All evaluations have a comprehensive list of indicators, which includes number of modules in ideology and politics, number of credits of each module, title of these modules, qualifications of staff even the size of classroom. To prepare for the review, we interpreted the criteria and the indicators, and mapped those requirements to XJTLU's practice, with the objective to demonstrate that although the module title and the number of credits did not meet Ministry of Education's requirements, the learning outcome and the innovative ways of delivering the module can ensure that 95% of the requirements are met. (P5, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

As described by the participant, in order to deal with the tensions caused by different normative criteria, interpretation of criteria has been adopted as a response strategy. According to the participant, the process of interpretation of criteria is '*very much like exchanging RMB to pound, we have integrated the requirements of both Chinese and UK requirements, and worked out the equation for the exchange, so as to respond to the different demands of Chinese and UK culture*' (P5). The analogy used by the participant describes how XJTLU actively seek to change the norms or influence the pressure from different logic. The response strategy describes by the participant echoes the strategy of responding to multiple institutional logic proposed by Oliver (1991), in which 'organisations actively seek to change the norms and influence the pressuring external agencies' (p. 247).

Although in XJTLU's case, it is not possible to change the norms of the

government-driven logic, the university has been actively interpreting the normative criteria and trying to influence the government review panel. As indicated by the participant that a full briefing about the XJTLU's context and practice would be presented to the review panel at the beginning, so that they understand the special cultural and practical context of joint-venture universities.

Innovation is not only reflected in criteria interpretation, but also in programme design. Another participant reflected how XJTLU has been innovative in programme design in order to respond to the competing logics. XJTLU is planning to deliver a new model of education in its branch campus, which is called Syntegrative Education. The education model aims to nurture all-round talents for future industry elites with in-depth collaboration with industries. In addition to award traditional degrees, the Syntegrative Education will also award an industry degree, which fits into neither the Chinese Ministry of Education nor the University of Liverpool's systems. The participant reflected that:

*So, the challenge is to find degree programme and degree structure which meets all the requirements, which is innovative and different enough to satisfy both sides. With the efforts of faculties and professional service staff, XJTLU has designed an innovative programme structure for Syntegrative Education which has got approval from the University of Liverpool. The next step is to seek Chinese Ministry of Education's approval, which is estimated won't take long. This case shows that the design of degree programme has been flexible and innovative to satisfy the two conservative bodies, the Ministry of Education and the University of Liverpool. (P7)*

As stated by the above participant, flexibility and innovation in programme design has been considered as one of the main reasons for XJTLU's successful achievements in its educational aspiration. One of the participants in leadership role indicated that XJTLU had overcome many obstacles and managed tensions

because of its innovative and creative approach. Although as a joint-venture university, XJTLU is under the influences of the norms of two logics and seems to have less freedom, because of its innovative approach, it has created more space for development within the values and norms of the government-driven and self-regulation logics of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. The participant reflected the strategy as follows:

*If we do things rationally with innovation, if we have good philosophy, we can use it to convince people and strike for more freedom. That's our strategy to test the innovative educational model in Chinese context and in the two quality assurance systems. (P10)*

The above quote shows that the innovative educational model has enabled XJTLU to influence the external agencies and change the norms of the multiple logics which has helped XJTLU to get more flexibility for its development. The innovative approach has been reflected in XJTLU's vision and mission and strategies. In XJTLU's Vision and Mission Statement (XJTLU, 2008), one of the missions is:

*Explore new models for higher education that will exert a strong influence on the development of education in China and the world. (XJTLU, 2008)*

The above statement shows that being innovative is evident in XJTLU's mission and has influenced the university's response to the pressures from multiple institutional logics. The above findings echo Greenwood et al.'s (2011) claim that organisational identity defines the distinct attributes of an organisation which makes it different from other organisations, especially for those organisations that share the same institutional category.

In recent years, the development of an innovative identity has become a key

agenda for XJTLU. In XJTLU's 2018-2028 Strategy, the following statement has been made:

*XJTLU will aim to become an international, innovative and industrial-linked China's university of the future. (XJTLU, 2017)*

The above statement clearly illustrates that XJTLU has created an innovative university identity as a strategy to response to multiple institutional logics. The findings are aligned with Kraatz & Block's (2008) claim that organisations don't not passively receive the institutional prescriptions, rather, they would interpret, translate and transform them through organisational identities.

In order to stand out from other joint-venture universities in China, constructing an identity featuring innovative in exploring new educational model has helped XJTLU respond to the pressures from multiple institutional logics and improve its reputation. Organisational identity is one of the key factors for considering organisational responses to multiple institutional logics (Greenwood et al., 2011), as 'institutional logics can drive behaviour only after specific identity is brought into play' (p. 346). The identity of an innovative joint-venture universities in China also influences the behaviour of staff members of the university. When facing the conflicts caused different norms and materialised practice of the government-driven and self-regulation logics, they always look for innovative solutions to address the problem and try to balance the influences of two logics.

Pache & Santos' (2010) research provides a framework for the responding strategy adopted by an organisation. According to them, an organisation's response to multiple logics is determined by which logic will be represented and embedded in organisation's decision and behaviour and that representation is dictated by those with power. Similarly, Heimer's (1999) research proposes that the status of people carrying a particular logic and their involvement in making the decisions can

influence an organisation's response to multiple logics. Kraatz & Block's (2008) research approaches organisational response to multiple institutional logics from a different perspective. They propose four types of responses may enact by organisation. Namely, deleting one or more identities, balancing various identities through increasing cooperation's between them, detaching the organisation from the institutional field and building durable identities that can cope with multiple external pressures, and compartmentalizing identities through preserving a core identity and only giving ceremonial commitment to other logics. The findings of my research support one of the four types of responses enacted by organisation proposed by Kraatz & Block (2008).

Compared to other joint-venture universities in the field, as indicated by Yang (2008), many of the joint-venture universities in China aim to become a branch campus of the exporting institutions, the innovative and independent identity created by XJTLU helps the university to detach the organisation from institutional field, which echoes Ktraatz & Block's (2008) claim that organisation can detach the organisation from institutional field and build an identity against multiple external pressures. Additionally, the findings also show that while most people assumed that joint-venture universities in China have less freedom because they have to comply with values and norms of the Chinese and foreign quality assurance systems, XJTLU has acquired relative more flexibilities in getting government's approval for new programmes and new campus. This is a unique contribution that have not been identified by previous studies and will definitely provide some references to other institutions in the field.

Greenwood et al. (2011) suggest that two circumstances should be considered for the identity approach. One is that organisational actors' attitude towards the identity, whether it is positive or negative. The other is the strength of the identity. When asked about their comments on XJTLU, many participants perceived XJTLU positively as an innovative pioneer of higher education, and they



considered XJTLU success is closely related to its continuing innovation of educational model.

*The freedom and flexibilities we have got from Chinese government and shareholders are the result of our continuing innovation. The educational philosophy, operational mechanism and reflection on education helped us to interpret and map various external requirements to our practices, and ensured that we can meet these requirements as well as make innovations. (P9, Academic Faculty in Leadership Role)*

When talking about how XJTLU has satisfied the normative criteria of Chinese subject review for Physical Education, in the context that the credit number, student-to-staff ratio and module content of XJTLU's Physical Education do not meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education, a participant who was responsible for the review indicated that they had explained to the panel how Physical Education was delivered innovatively at XJTLU, and the curriculum matched better with the objectives of Physical Education.

*We explained to the Review Panel that although we only have one credit for Physical Education, our objective and learning outcomes well matched the requirements of Ministry of Education. We tried to promote the idea of 'improving life through sports' to our students, and encouraged students to do sports through our sports clubs. The purpose of Physical Education is to help students develop understanding of various sports activities and learn how to practice and protect themselves when doing sports. To that end, our Physical Education can well meet the objective. And we do more than that. We offer more than twenty different sports for students to choose and we want to make sports a habit for students. Also, we are considering providing sports consultation services to students to help them choose the sports suit them the best. (P4, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above reflection shows that when dealing with different requirements from multiple logics, XJTLU's staff tend to act positively to find innovative ways to solve the conflicts caused by different institutional logics. Although the government-driven logic emphasizes compliance with uniform criteria, the innovative organisational identity has positive influence on staff's mind-set and behaviour. Therefore, staff can act positively towards the innovative identity, through innovatively interpreting the demands of multiple logics, and designing new programmes. The findings also demonstrate that the innovative identity is shared deeply by the organisational members.

#### **4.4.3 Empowering Staff**

In most Chinese universities, quality assurance is the responsibility of the Registry. Rather than embedding the quality assurance process in each academic department, quality assurance is more like an administrative order for faculty to follow. At XJTLU, quality assurance process is embedded in the operation of each academic department and every academic staff member is responsible for quality assurance. As XJTLU's academic staff are from more than 50 different countries, their diverse backgrounds and experiences have become one of the biggest challenges for XJTLU's quality assurance. Bevirt & Suddaby (2016) claim that individual's beliefs, values and behaviours reflect broader social reality so that they are carriers of institutional logics. At XJTLU, in addition to the government-driven and self-regulation logics, academic staff with different background and experiences actually bring their own values and beliefs to the practice of XJTLU, hence increasing the institutional complexity. In this circumstance, ensuring academic staff with different backgrounds and experiences operating in a consistent for quality assurance is essential. One of the participants described the challenges as follows:

*I think probably the biggest challenge that we faced was actually around the people. You've got people operating in the system who have very different*

*backgrounds. So, we have had very different experiences of higher education, depending on which country they have been previously exposed to. And some of them are very new to higher education. ... When you got that varied background and experiences, the QA system becomes much more important. Because if it works, it ensures everyone is operating to a consistent standard, regardless of their background and experiences. (P3)*

In the interview data, several participants mentioned about the different marking criteria in different countries. XJTLU followed the UK marking system, in which 40% is a pass, equivalent to 60% in Chinese system. In the UK system, students can be awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> class degree if their overall mark achieved 70%. Because staff of XJTLU have been previously exposed to different norms of quality assurance practices, their beliefs on marking criteria are very different. Without proper training, the assessment practice, which is dominant by the UK self-regulation logic, may be greatly influenced by staff's prior logics. The main purpose of the quality assurance system at XJTLU is to ensure that regardless of staff's previous experiences, they are actually operating in a consistent and fair way for students. To tackle the challenge, XJTLU has developed several mechanisms to help staff understand the quality assurance system at XJTLU and to empower them to implement quality process in their daily work.

Firstly, training staff of the quality assurance system is critical. As suggested by Battilana & Dorado (2010), organisation members can be trained to follow given institutional logics, and training can inform them the choice of responding to conflicting institutional logics. Therefore, all new academic staff of XJTLU are required to register on inhouse designed Certificate for Professional Studies in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. The Self-Evaluation Document for the Reaccreditation by the University of Liverpool states the following requirements:

*Since the last review, all newly appointed staff have been encouraged to take the Certificate for Professional Studies. Initially this was delivered by the University of Liverpool, with staff from there coming to XJTLU twice a year to deliver modules during intensive teaching periods. The programme was developed by UoL for their own staff and had little Chinese context, though it did provide a good background and training for staff members new to the UK system. (XJTLU, 2015)*

The above statement shows that staff training has been used as a main strategy to help academic staff with varied prior values and beliefs understand the dominant institutional logic. The training explains the values, norms and principles associated with the self-regulation logic of UK quality assurance system. After the training, there is a process of negotiation with academic staff so the self-regulation logic is operationalised in practices in different subjects and settings. As reflected by a participant, workshops were also organized from time to time.

*We held a number of workshops for all academic staff on the assessment process, which was run jointly by Registry and experienced Head of Department to help new staff to understand XJTLU and specific requirements of XJTLU assessment process. (P12)*

The above statement illustrates that workshops for quality assurance system have been organised to ensure the norms of the dominant logic of are materialised in XJTLU's quality assurance practice. Although proper training can prepare academic staff with different prior values and beliefs to understand the norms of quality assurance system at XJTLU, there are also some problems with senior academic staff whose prior institutions have strong influence on their values and beliefs. Therefore, it is more difficult to change their institutions and behaviour.

Secondly, developing self-critical ability of academic staff is the key to the success

of self-regulation quality assurance system. A participant has the following reflection on the developing staff's self-critical ability.

*The Internal Periodic Review process was quite new for academic departments of XJTLU in early years. There was no prior experience of having a member of panel sitting in another department to review the department. For many people, that was quite challenging, to moving to a mindset of being critical to another department within the university, is simply test what they are doing and help them to improve. At that time, to many academic staff at XJTLU, this was totally new experience. Sometimes, internal panel members have to be encouraged to challenge the department they are reviewing. Because creating the culture of understanding, challenging and finding points of criticism, then responding to the points raised is actually a good thing. It is not a hostile thing; it is actually a positive thing. (P12, University Senior Leader)*

The above statement shows that XJTLU has encouraged staff to develop the self-critical ability through various internal review process. Self-criticality is a key element associated with the norms of dialogue of self-regulation logic. It encourages constructive dialogue between internal and external examiners with the aim to continuously improve the quality. Barley & Tolbert (1997) define identity scripts as 'observable, recurrent activities, and patterns of interaction characteristic of a particular setting' (p. 98). Developing staff's self-critical ability is actually designing the identity scripts for organisation members, who are expected to demonstrate self-criticality as observable activities and patterns of interaction in a setting that is dominated by self-regulation logic.

Thirdly, engaging people to communicate with each other to make quality assurance work is important. A participant highlighted the importance of the communication in quality assurance system.

*The really important thing about QA system, and it is particularly important is to enable people to talk to each other about their expectations on students and they have similar expectations on each level. (P3, Administrator in Manager Role)*

The above reflection reveals that encouraging active communication is important strategy to constructing identity scripts for organisation members which helps them to respond to conflicts caused by different norms of logics. The norms of activity associated with self-regulation logic require organisation members to actively communicate with each other. However, the norms of passivity associated with government-driven logic encourage compliance with government regulations and criteria. In the context that self-regulation logic is dominant at XJTLU, constructing the identity scripts which encourage active communication behaviour pattern can help staff with their various prior institutions respond consistently to institutional pressures.

In summary, the above findings show that XJTLU has adopted three ways of empowering staff to construct identity scripts of self-criticality and active communication, by which staff with prior values and beliefs can make sense of the logic of quality assurance system at XJTLU. Bevirt & Suddaby (2016) acknowledge that scripts provide the basis for individuals to reproduce institutional logics through social interaction, and they are both cognitive and behavioural. The training sessions for new staff at XJTLU make them understand the norms and practices associated with the dominant self-regulation logic. The development of self-critical ability and encouraging active communication are also strategies to construct the identity scripts which help them to adopt the distinct assumptions about organisational reality, and reconstruct their professional identity scripts in the new environment. Barley & Tolbert (1997) claim that logics can be embedded to individual's scripts through design. The training for new

academic staff is the process to embed the norms of self-regulation logic to new staff's identity scripts. Through encouraging self-criticality and active communication, the logic is enacted by new academic staff and the self-regulation logic is reconciled into their own personal scripts.

#### **4.5 Summary of Findings**

The findings above indicate that the Chinese quality assurance system represents a government-driven logic with the core value emphasizing on compliance and the norms being acquiescence and passivity. The UK quality assurance system demonstrates a self-regulation logic, with the core values of enhancing student experiences and the norms being active dialogue with internal and external examiners and collective decision-making. When the two logics manifest at the context of XJTLU, the quality assurance is mostly dominant by the self-regulation logic. The presence of multiple logics has caused conflicts in programme design and progression rules, because of different values and norms associated with the logics. The conflicts are also influenced by the cultural difference of China and UK. The findings also show that in order to respond to the tensions caused by multiple logics, strategies including optimising organisational structure through structurally differentiated hybrid, creating an innovative organisational identity and constructing identity scripts for new academic staff have been adopted. The findings also suggest that attention should be paid to cultural context when developing quality assurance systems at transnational higher education institutions in China.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Significance of the Research**

The research makes contributions to both theoretical and practical development of quality assurance of transnational education. Although there is a variety of literature on multiple institutional logics and organisational responses to multiple logics, there is no study applying institutional theory to the quality assurance system of transnational higher education. This research enriches the theoretical framework of how organisational structure and identity shape universities' responses to multiple instructional logics, and adds to the literature of institutional theory. Practically, with increasing overseas institutions of higher education wishing to collaborate with Chinese universities, this research offers a point of reference on how to assure standards of the provision of transnational programs in the Chinese context.

#### **5.1.1 Significance of the Research to Theory**

This research makes an effort to advance research in institutional theory. In particular, it enriches the literature relating to organisational response to multiple institutional logics. The research draws on existing research on multiple institutional logics and organisational responses by Greenwood et al., (2011); Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury (2012); Kraatz & Block (2008); and Bevirt & Suddaby (2016).

Universities have to balance numerous incompatible influences therefore are subject to demands of multiple logics such as demands for relevant teaching (informed by state logic), research exploitation (informed by commercial logic) and academically ambitious research (informed by public science logic) (Schildt & Prkmann, 2016). My research interest is to find out to what extent are institutional logics manifest in relation to the quality assurance practice at XJTLU and how they interact with each other, and how XJTLU responds to multiple



institutional logics if they are evident. The findings from this study show that XJTLU is subject to the influence of the government-driven logic of Chinese quality assurance system and the self-regulation logic of the UK quality assurance system. These two logics have distinct values and norms and have been materialised in XJTLU's quality assurance practice. The interactions of these two logics are mostly dominant by the UK self-regulation logic, but they are also integrated in some circumstances. Therefore, the presence of multiple logics has caused conflicts. As XJTLU faculty are from 50 different countries, their prior values and institutions also increase the institutional complexity at XJTLU.

Prior research on organisational responses to multiple institutional logics either focus on organisational strategies or organisational structures (Greenwood et al., 2011). Studies on organisation's strategy in response to multiple logics approach the question from the perspectives of representation and voice (Pache & Santos, 2010), distribution of power (Heimer, 1999), or identity and decoupling (Kraatz & Block 2009; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Some other research approaches organisational responses to multiple institutional logics through the lens of organisation's structures and practice. Two distinct structures have been identified by researchers. One structure is blended hybrids through which organisations combine practices from different logics into one organisational in order to achieve effective performance (Chen & O'Mahoney, 2011). Another structure is structural differentiation in which organisations develop different separate subunits to deal with different logics (Anand, Gardner & Morris, 2007).

Although these research offer divergent perspectives to study organisation's response to multiple institutional logics, the focus is mostly on organisational and institutional level. Few studies analyse multiple institutional logics from individual level. There is a lack of literature in how individuals of an organisation interpret and interact with the multiple institutional logics therefore enact to respond to institutional pressures. To address the gap, increasing researchers have

paid attention to individual level analysis of multiple institutional logics. Bevirt & Suddaby's (2016) study addresses the gap by claiming that constructing of identity scripts helps individuals interpret institutional pressures with subjectivity.

Most theoretical or empirical research assume that organisations enact single and sustainable responses (Greenwood et al., 2011). However, they ignore the possibility that an organisation may employ several strategies to respond to multiple institutional logics and that the analysis of organisation's responses can take place both on organisational and individual levels. My research uses the concept of multiple institutional logics to analyse the quality assurance system of transnational education in China and identifies strategies adopted by XJTLU to respond to multiple institutional logics on organisational and individual levels.

This research addresses the gap of existing literature on organisational response to multiple institutional logics. The findings show that XJTLU responds to multiple institutional logics from organisational and individual levels. On organisational level, XJTLU adopted two strategies to respond to multiple logics. The first strategy is optimising organisational structure through structurally differentiated hybrid, which resulted in creating two subunits to deal with the government-driven and self-regulation logics separately. The second strategy is creating an innovative organisational identity so that staff can be innovative in criteria interpretation and programme design. On individual level, the university has adopted the strategy of constructing identity scripts for individual staff through providing trainings and encouraging self-criticality and communications among staff. This strategy enables staff with different background and experiences to make sense of the logic of the quality assurance system at XJTLU and to act accordingly.

This research responds to Greenwood et al.'s (2011) call on studies on sustainability and variability of organisational responses and makes contributions

to the literature of organisational responses to multiple institutional logics.

### **5.1.2 Significance of the Research to Practice**

The research is expected to have direct impact on institutions of transnational higher education in China. With increasing overseas institutions of higher education wishing to collaborate with Chinese universities (Yang, 2008), how to respond to the demands of the Chinese quality assurance system while maintaining and reinforcing the quality assurance system of the home universities will be a key question for overseas universities. New institutions of transnational higher education will face similar challenges which have been experienced by XJTLU, such as how to deal with different norms associated with different quality assurance systems, and how to respond to the government-driven logic of the Chinese quality assurance system. New institutions of transnational education can adopt some of the strategies proposed in this study, for example, changing the organisational structure to create separate units to deal with different institutional logics; creating an innovative organisational identity to enable staff to deal with challenges innovatively, and providing more comprehensive staff training to construct identity scripts for new staff.

The research is also expected to have positive influence on the quality assurance system of public universities in China. With the new quality project launched by the Chinese Ministry of Education, which is called ‘Double-First Class’ aiming to develop a number of world class universities and disciplines by the end of 2050 (MoE, 2015), Chinese public universities will pay more attention to their internal quality assurance system, in addition to government quality evaluations, in order to enhance the competitiveness of the universities and produce top talents. The quality assurance system established at XJTLU combines the strength of the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems, with a focus on student engagement in the quality assurance process, external examining, and the continuous enhancement of quality, the process of establishing these processes could provide

a framework for Chinese universities to establish a self-regulation quality assurance system. Chinese universities willing to enhance their internal quality assurance system could join the tailored training programmes offered by XJTLU to learn from XJTLU's experience of how to establish a self-critical quality assurance mechanism.

The research demonstrates that the norms of active dialogue with internal and external examiner of the self-regulation logic can help the academic staff in universities develop self-critical ability and therefore provide constructive feedback to enhance quality. Hoecht (2006) also claims that external examiners played a key role in maintaining teaching quality, because their review of exam papers and module documents can help them judge whether the quality of a university is comparable to similar universities. Currently, most Chinese universities don't have the external examining system so it is difficult to measure the quality of their provision. One practical implication of this research is that based on XJTLU's external examining practice, the external examining process could be transplanted to other Chinese universities through providing academic staff with rich external examining experiences to be external examiner of their modules or programmes. If this can be implemented, it would be easier for Chinese universities to adapt to the norms of active dialogue with external examiners, which is a common practice to world top universities, and consequently help Chinese universities to enhance their quality and increase their international standings.

Another practical contribution of this research is that it recommends improving communications between professional service and academic staff can enhance the quality. In 2010, XJTLU created the PMQA Office to support academic departments to implement the quality assurance system. Rather than playing a policing role, PMQA Office is supporting academic departments and working alongside academic staff to enhancing the quality assurance process. The close

and supportive relationship between academic staff and professional service staff is critical to the success of quality assurance system. Creating dialogues between different groups of people within and outside the university is important. Within the university, faculties who are teaching on related courses are encouraged to talk on what they are expecting their students to do, and ensuring they have similar expectations on each level. Each department also has regular meetings with their equivalent at the University of Liverpool to discuss expectations that they had on students. In addition, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Centre for Academic Affairs spend a lot of time to meet all staff in every department to pass on the key messages about the quality assurance requirements. These practice can be easily implemented in other universities to help improve the quality.

Finally, the research also has practical implications for the quality assurance practice at XJTLU. The findings suggest that cultural difference may affect student's performance as they are studying a degree programme in a second language. It is recommended that when implementing strict progression rules at XJTLU, consideration should also be given to student's learning preference and cognitive styles (Sharp, 2017). There should be more training in Year 1 on critical thinking skills and English for Academic Purposes, and counselling services should be provided to students. These measures will help students to develop basic learning skills and adapt to the active learning style which is important for the success in university studies. The findings from the study also indicate that some of the requirements of the Chinese and UK quality assurance are incompatible, which have placed much pressure on staff working in the PMQA Office. It is also recommended that XJTLU leaders should engage more actively in dialogues with the Chinese educational authorities and the University of Liverpool, to create more flexibility for XJTLU to develop a robust yet innovative quality assurance system suitable for transnational higher education in China.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Research**

The findings of the research are limited due to a number of factors, including discussion on institutional autonomy, small sample size, limited access to other joint-venture universities in China and my role as practitioner researcher.

The relationship between the state and higher education institutions have been debated intensively over the past decade. According to Bennetot & Estermann (2017), institutional autonomy is an important factor for developing universities' profiles. They have developed an Autonomy Scorecard with four dimensions of autonomy including organisational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy and academic autonomy. In the field of academic autonomy, a university's capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms and providers are one of the key indicators to evaluate a university's autonomy. The findings from my study indicate that the Chinese quality assurance system reflects the logic of government-driven and the UK quality assurance system reflects the logic of self-regulation, which seems that the UK universities have more freedom and autonomy in quality assurance system. However, Bennetot & Estermann's (2017) Autonomy Scorecard shows that even UK universities are not able to select quality assurance mechanism freely, and the academic autonomy ranking of the UK is 3, after Estonia and Finland. Further discussions on the academic autonomy in the fields of the Chinese and the UK quality assurance systems may yield more interesting findings and would contribute to the theoretical development of organisational autonomy.

For this research, twelve participants have been interviewed to collect their views on the quality assurance system at XJTLU. Although the selection of the sample tried to cover a wider range of administrative and faculty members, who have been involved in quality assurance practice, most participants are in middle or senior management roles. According to Greenwood et. al (2011), the power of institutional logic's representative decides which logic has voice and has more

influences on decisions and behaviours. Participants in this research may give voice to the institutional logic that they prefer. So their responses to the interview questions may be biased by their preferred institutional logics. If more participants in ordinary administrative or teaching positions could be included in the sample, more representative and interesting findings may be discovered.

Because quality assurance documents are internally available and mostly confidential, it is difficult to get access to the quality assurance documents of other joint-venture universities, which are established in collaboration with either UK or US universities. Conducting a comparative study on two universities paring with UK and US universities respectively is not possible. Although single case studies can provide a deep analysis of an organisation, comparative analysis involving another joint-venture university which has integrated the US quality assurance system would offer deeper understanding of how institutions of transnational higher education respond to multiple institutional logics. According to Dill (2014), the US quality assurance framework is different from other countries, in areas such as transparency, grading standards and educational cohesiveness of baccalaureate education. A comparative study on the quality assurance of the UK and US originated transnational higher education in China will help analyse the quality assurance of transnational education from diverse angles and therefore develop deeper understanding of quality assurance of transnational education.

Becoming a practitioner researcher requires a set of skills and attributes. According to Lee (2008), developing a personal toolkit is essential for doctorate study and research. During the whole journey of my doctorate study, I have found that critical thinking and research skills are the two areas that are most challenging for me. As practitioner researchers, we are expected to demonstrate the ability of critically making judgments of the literature we read, analysing and evaluating new ideas and assumptions of our peers (Laureate, 2011). This research is a case

study of the organisation I work for. Conducting research of my own professional context requires me to be critical both in academic and professional context. I need to develop critical thinking skills to explore ideas below the surface and to examine the main theories, arguments and practice of academic and professional subjects, with the aim to develop deeper understanding, propose alternatives to replace well-received theories and practice, and create new academic and practical knowledge.

According to Bell (2010), research projects require mastering research technique and developing plan of actions. I understand that critical thinking is not about criticism, but about exploring ideas below surface and to propose alternatives to replace well-received ideas. When I was conducting my research, I have constantly asked myself whether I have reviewed other's study through the critical lens, and whether there are any gaps in existing research which I can address in my studies. The critical thinking skills have also been applied to the process of writing up the thesis. When I was analysing the research data, I often critically challenged myself whether I could interpret the data from a different angle, and whether there are implying meanings in the interview data that have been neglected. With critical thinking and other research techniques developed through the programme, I was able to complete the thesis with a critical lens.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The research is a single case study of integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems at a joint-venture university in China. Single case study is chosen as the research method because it offers opportunities to investigate phenomenon more deeply. As pointed out by Vaughan (1992) that multiple case study may discover similarities and differences. Since there are four joint-venture universities that are awarding double degrees in China, further research can consider multiple case study of the quality assurance systems of two or more joint-venture universities. Because the US and UK quality assurance systems are



different, future studies can choose joint-venture universities pairing with the US and UK universities respectively, in order to conduct cross-case analysis of how joint-venture universities may respond differently to the institutional logics that may be associated with the US and UK quality assurance systems.

This research employs the concepts of multiple institutional logics and organisational response to investigate how a joint-venture university responds to the multiple institutional logics associated with the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems. The research identified three strategies to respond to institutional pressures from the government-driven and self-regulation logics, which are optimising organisational structure through structurally differentiated hybrid, creating an innovative organisational identity and constructing identity scripts through various staff training. It is recommended that further research can consider use of the active agency concept proposed by Abernethy & Chua (1996), through which individuals or group can drive changes in organisational processes with the power they have.

Quality assurance mechanisms are developed by the government to control the performance of educational institutions, in order to guarantee that state funding has been used properly. In the last decade, reforms have taken place on governments giving more autonomy to universities. Enders & Weyer (2013) claim that ‘the modern conception of the university embraced the idea of the university as a distinctive social institution which deserves special status in terms of autonomy and academic freedom based on a ‘social compact’ that evolved between higher education, the state and society.’ (p. 4). Further studies can explore how trends of organisational autonomy, such as changing from state control to state supervision, and from process control to output control have been reflected in quality assurance systems, and manifested in transnational higher education’s practice.

Further studies can also be conducted along the lines of Berdahl's (1990) argument on the relationship between government's reform and actions and the autonomy of universities. Berdahl (1990) points out that the British Government's recent actions in higher education are threatening the autonomy and future academic integrity of British Universities. He argues that the Universities Funding Council operates more on the market-driven mode, which may threaten the academic ethic and lead to fragmentation of the academic integrity. Building on this study, comparative studies on the buffer mechanisms that can reconcile the government's legitimate need for accountability and universities' need for autonomy.

In the current study, XJTLU has adopted the innovative organisational identity to encourage staff to interpret government requirements innovatively and transform the criteria to the internal standards. However, this strategy only helps to meet the minimum requirements. With the concept of active agency, as indicated by Hyvonen, Jarvinen & Pellinen (2009), active agency may help doing more than the minimum required as a strategy to respond to the institutional pressure.

Because different types of transnational education may adopt different quality assurance systems to fit for different settings, further study can also explore the quality assurance system of other joint-venture universities or joint-venture programmes in China to explore how quality assurance has been established in different types of transnational education in China, what the challenges they are facing, how they address the challenges and enhance the quality of transnational education in China.

Additionally, transnational education in China is not only regulated by national quality assurance policies and procedures, provincial educational authorities may also conduct regional quality reviews to monitor the quality of transnational education in the province. Comparative study can be conducted to compare the

different regional policies and quality evaluations' impact on the development of transnational education. Also, the lack of student's voice in the Chinese quality assurance system warrants further research on the Chinese quality assurance system with a focus on student's feedback and involvement.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This research has investigated the process of integrating the Chinese and UK quality assurance systems at a joint-venture university in China, through the lens of multiple institutional logics and organisational response. The research conducts a single case study through document analysis and interviews to collect data to answer the research questions.

The findings of the research have contributed to the literature of quality assurance of transnational higher education in China and strategies of organisational responses to multiple institutional logics, as well as to quality assurance practice of transnational higher education in China.

Firstly, the research claims that the institutional logic associated with the Chinese quality assurance system is a government-driven logic with a core value of compliance with government-defined criteria. The norms of the government-driven logic of Chinese quality assurance system is acquiescence and passivity, which aim to achieve excellent outcome to get government funding. Dominated by government-driven logic, many Chinese universities to respond to the pressure from the government-driven logic through passively preparing for the government quality evaluation, without paying attention to their own internal quality assurance system. The research also claims that the institutional logic associated with the UK quality assurance system is a self-regulation logic which values student experiences. The norms associated with the self-regulation logic are active dialogue with internal and external examiners, and collective decision-makings through committee structure. Both of the institutional logics are evident in the

practice of XJTLU's quality assurance practice, and some conflicts have been caused by the different norms and educational philosophies associated with the government-driven and self-regulation institutional logics. For instance, the different academic progression rules of the Chinese and UK quality assurance processes have caused tensions between students and the university. Additionally, the different values and norms associated with the government-driven and self-regulation logics also caused conflicts.

Secondly, the research has identified three strategies adopted by XJTLU to respond to the demands of multiple institutional logics. Echoing the structural differentiation proposed by Anand, Gardner & Morris (2007), XJTLU has created two separate subunits within the PMQA Office to deal with the government-driven and self-regulation logics. The structurally differentiated hybrid enables XJTLU to respond to the conflicts caused by the competing logics, because the two subunits are driven by different logics and can deal with the conflicts using the normative practices associated with the two logics. The second strategy is to create an innovative organisational identity which is shared deeply by the organisational members to encourage staff to be innovative in criteria interpretation and programme design. The third strategy is providing training to staff and encouraging self-critical attitude toward the demands of multiple institutional logics, and help them make sense of multiple logics associated with the quality assurance system at XJTLU, therefore to construct identity scripts for individual staff.

This research makes contributions to both the theoretical and practical development of knowledge related to institutional theory and the quality assurance of transnational higher education in China. Based on the research, a journal paper could be developed, if accepted, the findings and recommendations proposed in the study are expected to help enhance the quality assurance practice at Chinese universities, especially transnational education in China. The research is an

original, reflective and in-depth practitioner research on the quality assurance of transnational higher education and organisational response to multiple institutional logics that are expected to yield further research in how institutions of higher education respond to multiple institutional logics.

(Word Count: 48,707)

## REFERENCE

- Adkins, C. L. (1995). Previous work experience and organizational socialization: A longitudinal examination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 839–862.
- Alvesson, M. (2003). Methodology for close up studies – Struggling with closeness and closure. *Higher Education*, 46, 167-193.
- American Council on Education. (2006). Students on the Move: The Future of International Students in the United States. Retrieved from: <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=InfoCenter&CONTENTID=18573&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm>
- Anand, N., Gardner, H.K., & Morris, T. (2007). Knowledge-based innovation: Emergence and embedding of new practice areas in management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(2), 406–428.
- Andersson, T. & Liff, R. (2018). Co-optation as a response to competing institutional logics: Professionals and managers in healthcare. *Journal of Professions and Organisation*, 1-17.
- Arsel, Z. (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: a tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44.
- Azevedo, V., Carvalho, M., Fernandes-Costa, F., Mesquita, S., Soares, J., & Maia, A. (2017). *Interview transcription: conceptual issues, practical guidelines, and challenges*. Theoretical Paper, 159-168.
- Barley, S. R., & Tolbert, P. (1997). Institutionalization and structuration: Studying the links between action and institution. *Organisation Studies*, 18, 93–117.
- Battilana, J. & Dorado, S. (2010). Building sustainable hybrid organisations: the case of commercial microfinance organisations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53 (6), 1419-1440.
- Bell, J. (2010). *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*. Open University Press
- Bellingham, L. (2008). Quality Assurance and the Use of Subject Level Reference Points in the UK. *Quality in Higher Education*, 14(3), 265-276.
- Besharov, M. L., & Smith, W. K. (2014). Multiple institutional logics in organisations: explaining their varied nature and implications. *Academy of Management Review*. 39(3),

364–381.

- Bevort, F., & Suddaby, R. (2016). Scripting Professional Identities: How Individuals Make Sense of Contradictory Institutional Logics. *Journal of Professions and Organisation*, 3(1), 17-38.
- Bennetot, P. E. & Estermann, T. (2007). University Autonomy in Europe III. The Scorecard 2017. European University Association.
- Bie, D. & Yi, M. (2014). The context of higher education development and policy response in China. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39 (8), 1499-1510
- Billing, D. (2004). International comparisons and trends in external quality assurance of higher education: Commonality or diversity? *Higher Education*, 47, 113-137.
- Binder, A. (2007). For love and money: Organisations' creative responses to multiple environmental logics. *Theory and Society*, 36(6), 547–571.
- Boxenbaum, E., & Jonsson, S. (2008). Isomorphism, diffusion and decoupling. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Organisational Institutionalism*. London: SAGE.
- Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In Defense of Being "Native": The Case for Insider Academic Research. *Organisational Research Methods*, 10(1), 59.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Brinkmann, S. (2007). Could Interviews Be Epistemic? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (8), 1116–38.
- Brown, J. T. (2017) The Seven Silos of Accountability in Higher Education: Systematizing Multiple Logics and Field. *Research and Practice in Assessment*, 11,42-58.
- Brown, R. (2011). Academic Standards: The British Experience. *Change*: 65-70.
- Brown, S. L., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (1997). The art of continuous change: linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organisations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42(1), 1–34.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- CCCCP and State Council, (1993). Mission Outline of the Reform and Development of China's Education (zhong guo jiao yu gai ge he fa zhan gang yao). Central Committee

- of CCP and State council. [1993]3.
- Chen, K. K., & O'Mahoney, S. (2011). The selective synthesis of competing logics. Working paper, Boston University.
- Chou, C. P. (2008). Taiwan higher education at the crossroads: Its implications for China. *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 1(2), 148–163.
- Chung, C., & Luo, X. (2008). Institutional logics or agency costs: The influence of Corporate governance models on business group restructuring in emerging economies. *Organisation Science*, 19(5), 766–784.
- Cooper, D. J., Hinings, B., Greenwood, R., & Brown, J. L. (1996). Sedimentation and transformation in organisational change: The case of Canadian law firms. *Organisation Studies*, 17, 623–647.
- Costa, A. L. & Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*: 49-51.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* 2nd ed., CA: Sage: Thousand Oaks.
- Crotty, M. (1998). The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process. SAGE Publications.
- D'Aunno, T., Sutton, R.I., & Price, R.H. (1991). Isomorphism and external support in conflicting institutional environments: A study of drug abuse treatment units. *Academy of Management Journal*, 14, 636–661.
- Dacin, M. T., Dacin, P. A., & Tracey, P. (2011). Social entrepreneurship: A critique and future directions. *Organisation Science*, 22, 1203–1213.
- Dacin, T., Goldstein, J., & Scott, W. R. (2002). Institutional theory and institutional change: Introduction to the special research forum. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45, 45–56.
- Damanpour, F. (1991). Organisational innovation: a meta-analysis of effects of determinants and moderators. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3), 555-590.
- Das, C. R. Ramesh (2016). Handbook of Research on Global Indicators of Economic and Political Convergence. IGI Global.



- Derry, S. J. (1996). Cognitive schema theory in the constructivist debate. *Educational Psychologist*, 31 (3), 163-174.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 147–161.
- Doorbar, A., & Bateman, C. (2008). The growth of transnational higher education: The UK perspective. In Dunn and Wallace, 14–22.
- Driver, R., Asoko, H., Leach, J., Mortimer, E. and Scott, P. 1994. Constructing scientific knowledge in the classroom. *Educational Researcher*, 23(7), 5–12.
- Dunn, M. & Jones, M. B. (2010). Institutional Logics and Institutional Pluralism: The Contestation of Care and Science Logics in Medical Education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 55 (1), 114-149.
- Dutton, J.E., Roberts, L.M., & Bednar, J. (2009). Positive identities and organisations: An introduction and invitation. In L. Roberts & J. Dutton (Eds.). *Exploring positive identity and organisations: Building a theoretical and research foundation* (pp. 3-22). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Edwards, T. & Delbridge, R. (2011). Managing institutional complexity through multiple organizational arrangements: Negotiated order in the superyacht field. Cardiff Business School.
- Eisenhardt, K. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 532–550.
- Enders, J. de Boer, H. & Weyer, E. (2013). Regulatory autonomy and performance: the reform of higher education re-visited. *Higher Education*: 65 (5), 5-23.
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). (2010). Quality assurance in transnational higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso>
- Farquhar, J. D. (2012). *Case Study Research for Business*. SAGE Publications
- Feng, Yi. (2013) University of Nottingham Ningbo China and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University: globalization of higher education in China. *Higher Education*, 65(4), 471-

- Ferlie, E., Fitzgerald, L., Wood, M., & Hawkins, C. (2005). The non-spread of innovations: The mediating role of professionals. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 117–134.
- Fiss, P.C. (2009). Case studies and the configurational analysis of organisational phenomena. In *The SAGE handbook of case-based methods*, ed. D.S. Byrne, and C.C. Ragin, 424–440. London/Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Friedland, R., & Alferd, R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions. *The new institutionalism in organisational analysis*, 232–263. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Garrett, R. (2004). Foreign higher education activity in China. *International Higher Education*, Winter, 21-23.
- Gibbert, M. & Ruigrok, W. (2010). The “What” and “How” of Case Study Rigor: Three Strategies Based on Published Work. *Organisational Research Methods*, 13 (4), 489-502.
- Gilbert, C. G., & Christensen, C. M. (2005). Anomaly-seeking research: thirty years of development in resource allocation theory. In *From resource allocation to strategy*, ed. J.L. Bower, & C.G. Gilbert, 71–89. Oxford: University Press, Oxford.
- Gioia, D. A., & Thomas, J. B. (1996). Identity, image and issue interpretation: Sensemaking during strategic change in academia. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41(3), 370-403.
- Glynn, M. A. (2008). Beyond constraint: How institutions enable identities. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of organisational institutionalism*, 413–430. London: Sage.
- Goodrick, E., & Salancik, G. (1996). Organisational discretion in responding to institutional practices: Hospitals and cesarean births. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41, 1–28.
- Grayson, T. E. (2012). Program evaluation in higher education. In C. Secolsky & D.B. Denison (Eds.). *Handbook on measurement, assessment, and evaluation in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Green, D. (1994). What is quality in higher education? Concepts, policy and practice. *What is Quality in Higher Education?* Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press).

- Greenwood, R., Diaz, A. M., Li, S. X., & Lorente, J. C. (2010). The multiplicity of institutional logics and the heterogeneity of organisational responses. *Organisation Science*, 21(2), 521–539.
- Greenwood, R., Diaz, A. M., Li, S. X., and Lorente, J. C. (2010). The multiplicity of institutional logics and the heterogeneity of organisational responses. *Organisation Science*, 21 (2), 521-539.
- Greenwood, R., Raynard, M., Kodeih, F., Micelotta, E. R., & Lounsbury, M. (2011). Institutional complexity and organisational responses. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 317-371.
- Guba, E. G & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. *Handbook of qualitative research*.
- Guerreiro, M. S., Rodrigues, L. & Craig, R. (2012). Voluntary adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards by large unlisted companies in Portugal – Institutional logics and strategic responses. *Accounting, Organisations and Society*, 37 (7), 482-499.
- Hallett, T. (2010). The myth incarnate: Recoupling processes, turmoil, and inhabited institutions in an urban elementary school. *American Sociological Review*, 75(1), 52–74.
- Han, J. K., Kim, N., & Srivastava, R. K. (1998). Market orientation and organisational performance: is innovation a missing link? *Journal of Marketing*, 62(4), 30-45.
- Harman, G. (1998). Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Their Use as Policy Instruments: major international approaches and the Australian experiences since 1993. *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3), 331-348.
- Hartley, J. (2004). *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. SAGE Publications.
- Harvey, L. & Knight, P. T. (1996). *Transforming Higher Education*. Open University Press.
- Heffernan, T., Morrison, M., Basu, P., & Sweeney, A. (2010). Cultural differences, learning Styles and transnational education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 32(1), 27-39.
- Heimer, C. A. (1999). Competing institutions: Law, medicine, and family in neonatal intensive care. *Law and Society Review*, 33, 17–66.

- Helms, S., Oliver, C., & Webb, K. (2012). Antecedents of settlement on a new institutional practice: Negotiation of the Iso 26000 standard on social responsibility. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(5), 1120–1145.
- Hensmans, M. (2003). Social movement organisations: A metaphor for strategic actors in institutional fields. *Organisation Studies*, 24(3), 355–381.
- Hodder, I. (2000). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, 703–16. London: Sage Publications.
- Hodder, I. (2000). Towards Reflexive Method in Archaeology: The Example at Çatalhöyük. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Hodson, P. J., & Thomas, H. G. (2001). Higher education as an international commodity: Ensuring quality in partnerships. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 26(2), 101-12.
- Hoecht, A. (2006). Quality assurance in UK higher education: Issues of trust, control, professional autonomy and accountability. *Higher Education*, 51(4), 541–563.
- Hoffman, A. J. (1999). Institutional evolution and change: Environmentalism and the U.S. chemical industry. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 42, 351-371.
- Hou, Y. C., Ince, M., Tsai, S., Wang, W., Hung, V., Jiang, C. L., & Chen, K. H. J. (2016). Quality assurance of joint degree programs from the perspective of quality assurance agencies: experience in east Asia. *Higher Education Research & Development*. 35(3), 473-487.
- Huang, F. (2003). Transnational Higher Education: A perspective from China. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 22(2), 193-203.
- Huang, X. H., Adamso, B. & Lee, J. C. (2014). The move to quality assurance in Chinese higher education: Tensions between policy and practices. *London Review of Education*, 12 (3), 286-301.
- Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods, in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (California, Sage).
- Hyvonen, T., Jarvinen, J., Pellinen, J. Rahko, T. (2009). Institutional Logics, ICT and Stability

- of Management Accounting. *European Accounting Review*, 18 (2), 241-275.
- Jackson, N. (1997). Internal academic quality audit in UK higher education: part II - implications for a national quality assurance framework. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 5(1), 46-54.
- Jacobson, N., Gewurtz, R., & Haydon, E. (2007). Ethical review of interpretive research: problems and solutions. *Ethics & Human Research*, 29(5), 1-8.
- Jay, J (2012) Navigating Paradox as a Mechanism of Change and Innovation in Hybrid Organisations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 138-157.
- Jay, J. (2012). Navigating paradox as a mechanism of change and innovation in hybrid organisations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 137–159.
- Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education (DoE). (2007). Notice on Review of Degree Awarding Power Application. Retrieved from [http://jyt.jiangsu.gov.cn/art/2016/7/14/art\\_55512\\_7555598.html](http://jyt.jiangsu.gov.cn/art/2016/7/14/art_55512_7555598.html)
- Kang, S., & Snell, S.A. (2009). Intellectual capital architectures and ambidextrous learning: A framework for human resource management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 46(1), 65–92.
- Kinser, K. (2011). Multinational quality assurance. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 155.
- Kitchener, M. (2002). Mobilizing the logic of managerialism in professional fields: The case of academic health centre mergers. *Organisation Studies*, 23(3), 391–420.
- Knight, J. (2007). Cross-border higher education - issues and implications for quality assurance and accreditation. *Higher Education in the World*. 134-146.
- Kraatz, M. S., & Block, E. S. (2008). Organisational implications of institutional pluralism. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *Handbook of Organisational Institutionalism*, 243–275. London, U.K.: Sage.
- Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (3), 480–500.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Incorporated.

- Kwok, V., & Leland, H. (1982). An economic model of the brain drain. *The American Economic Review*, 91-100.
- Lao, K. S. (2003). Challenges to the public-welfare nature of education. *Educational Research*, 24(2), 3-9. (In Chinese)
- Lasanowski, V., & Verbik, L. (2007). *International student mobility: Patterns and trends*. London: Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Lee, N. & Lings, I. (2008). *Doing Business Research: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Liberale, A. P. & Kovach, J. (2017). Reducing the Time for IRB Reviews: A Case Study. *The Journal of Research Administration*, 48( 2), 37-50
- Lim, F. C. B. (2010). Do too many rights make a wrong? *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(3).
- Lounsbury, M. (2002). Institutional transformation and status mobility: The professionalization of the field of finance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45, 255–266.
- Lounsbury, M. (2007). A tale of two cities: Competing logics and practice variation in the professionalizing of mutual funds. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 289–307.
- Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative research design: an interactive approach*. Thousand Oakss, CA: Sage.
- McBurnie, G. (2000). Quality Matters in Transnational Education: Undergoing the GATE Review Process. An Australian – Asian Case Study. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 25-38
- McBurnie, G. (2008). Quality assurance for transnational education – International, national and institutional approaches. In Dunn and Wallace, 193–203.
- McCarthy, G. A. (2016). Adolescents in Second Language Qualitative Research: Managing the Interview Interface. *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*, 22 (1), 37-51.
- McClaran, A. (2010). The renewal of quality assurance in UK Higher Education. *Perspectives*, 14 (4), 108-113.
- McPherson, C. M., & Sauder, M. (2013). Logics in action: Managing institutional complexity

- in a drug court. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 58, 165–196.
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rdEd.). San Francisco: John Wiley
- Miliszewska, I., & Sztendur, M. (2012). Australian transnational education programmes in South East Asia: Student satisfaction with the learning environment. *Australian Universities' Review*, (54)2, 12-21.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2004). Regulations of People's Republic of China on Academic Degree, Retrieved from: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xxgk/zdggk\\_sxml/sxml\\_gdjy/gdjy\\_xwgl/xwgl\\_glb/index\\_2.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/zdggk_sxml/sxml_gdjy/gdjy_xwgl/xwgl_glb/index_2.html)
- Ministry of Education (MOE). (2015). Implementation Measures for the Regulations on Sino-foreign Cooperation in Running Schools. Retrieved from [http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe\\_162/200408/2544.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_162/200408/2544.html). (In Chinese)
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2018). The information published on the website. Retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.cn>
- Ministry of Education. (2003). Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese–Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools. Retrieved from: [http://old.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe\\_1778/200710/27718.html](http://old.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_1778/200710/27718.html)
- MoE. (2011). Notice on implementing undergraduate teaching evaluation in HEIs Retrieved from: [http://www.heec.edu.cn/modules/FileDownload-Servlet?fn=%E6%95%99%E8%82%B2%E9%83%A8%E5%8A%9E%E5%85%AC%E5%8E%85%E5%85%B3%E4%BA%8E%E5%BC%80%E5%B1%95%E6%99%AE%E9%80%9A%E9%AB%98%E7%AD%89%E5%AD%A6%E6%A0%A1%E6%9C%AC%E7%A7%91%E6%95%99%E5%AD%A6%E5%B7%A5%E4%BD%9C%E5%90%88%E6%A0%BC%E8%AF%84%E4%BC%B0%E7%9A%84%E9%80%9A%E7%9F%A5%EF%BC%88%E6%95%99%E9%AB%98%E5%8E%85%5B2011%5D%EF%BC%89%E5%8F%B7%EF%BC%89.pdf&efn=f\\_1331078903958\\_269.pdf](http://www.heec.edu.cn/modules/FileDownload-Servlet?fn=%E6%95%99%E8%82%B2%E9%83%A8%E5%8A%9E%E5%85%AC%E5%8E%85%E5%85%B3%E4%BA%8E%E5%BC%80%E5%B1%95%E6%99%AE%E9%80%9A%E9%AB%98%E7%AD%89%E5%AD%A6%E6%A0%A1%E6%9C%AC%E7%A7%91%E6%95%99%E5%AD%A6%E5%B7%A5%E4%BD%9C%E5%90%88%E6%A0%BC%E8%AF%84%E4%BC%B0%E7%9A%84%E9%80%9A%E7%9F%A5%EF%BC%88%E6%95%99%E9%AB%98%E5%8E%85%5B2011%5D%EF%BC%89%E5%8F%B7%EF%BC%89.pdf&efn=f_1331078903958_269.pdf)

- Mok, K. H. & Xu, X. (2008). When China Opens to the World: A Study of Transnational Higher Education in Zhejiang, China. *Asia Pacific Education Research Institute*, 9(4), 393-408.
- Mok, K. H., & Han, X. (2016). From 'brain drain' to 'brain bridging': transnational higher education development and graduate employment in China. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 38(3), 369-389.
- Morgeson, F. P., Mitchel, T. R. and Liu, D. (2015). Event system theory: an event-oriented approach to the organizational Sciences. *Academy Management Review*, 40(4), 325-340.
- Nair, G. S., & Riege, A. M. (1995). Convergent interviewing to refine the research problem of a PhD thesis. Sogar, D.H. and Weber, I. (Eds). *Marketing Educators' and Researchers' International Conference, Proceedings*, 2-5 July, Gold Coast.
- NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION (NCIHE). (1997). The Dearing report, report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education.
- National Research Council. (2013). Institutional Research Board (IRB) Review. Retrieved from:  
[http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/resdoc/pga\\_044750?\\_ga=2.28583100.1887819019.1540194599-944199095.1540194599](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/resdoc/pga_044750?_ga=2.28583100.1887819019.1540194599-944199095.1540194599)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE). (2003). The Principles of Good Practice of Overseas International Education Programmes for Non-US Nationals. Retrieved from:  
[https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/downloads/POLICIES/Pp47\\_Overseas\\_programs\\_for\\_non-US\\_Nationals.pdf](https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/downloads/POLICIES/Pp47_Overseas_programs_for_non-US_Nationals.pdf)
- Nhan, T. T. & Nguyen, H. C. (2018). Quality challenges in transnational higher education under profit-driven motives: The Vietnamese experience. *Educational Research*. 28 (1), 138-152.
- Nite, C., Singer, J. N., & Cunningham, G. B. (2013). Addressing competing logics Between the mission of a religious university and the demands of intercollegiate athletics. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 465-476.
- O'Connor, M. C. (1998). Can We Trace the "Efficacy of Social Constructivism"? *Review of*



*Research in Education*, 23, 25-71.

- Ocasio, W. (1997). Toward an attention-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18, 187–206.
- Oliver, C. (1991). Strategic responses to institutional processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 145–179.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. & Leech, N. L. (2005). On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodologies. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(5), 375-387.
- Özcan K. (2012). The Evaluation of the Global Research on the Education: A Scientometric Approach. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 1363-1367.
- Pache, A., & Santos, F. (2010). When worlds collide: The internal dynamics of organisational responses to conflicting institutional demands. *Academy of Management Review*, 35, 455–476.
- Pache, A., & Santos, F. (2011). Inside the hybrid organization: An organizational level view of responses to conflicting institutional demands, Working Paper DR-11001, ESSEC Research Center.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two Decades of Developments in Qualitative Inquiry A Personal, Experiential Perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 421-436.
- Pettigrew, A.M., Woodman, R.W., & Cameron, K.S. (2001). Studying organisational change and development: challenges for future research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 697-713.
- Phillipas, N. & Malhotra, N. (2008). Taking social construction seriously: extending the discursive approach in institutional theory.
- Poon-McBrayer, K. F. (2011). Quality Assurance Challenges of Transnational Higher Education in Hong Kong, *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, 23(1), 43-56.
- Pratt, M. G. & Foreman, P. O. (2000). Classifying managerial responses to multiple organizational identities. *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), 278-290.
- Pratt, M. G., & Foreman, P. (2000). Classifying managerial responses to multiple Organisational identities. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 18–42.

- Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to social research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Puzziferro, M., & Shelton, K. (2008). A model for developing high-quality online courses: Integrating a systems approach with learning theory. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 12(3-4). Newbury, MA: Online Learning Consortium.
- Pyvis, D. (2011). The need for context-sensitive measures of educational quality in transnational higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16(6), 733-744.
- Radnor, H. A. (2001). *Researching your professional practice: Doing interpretive research*. Open University Press
- Rapley, T. (2011). *Some Pragmatics of Data Analysis. Qualitative Research*. (3rd ED). SAGE Publications.
- Reay, T., & Hinings, C. R. (2009). Managing the rivalry of competing institutional logics. *Organisation Studies*, 30(06), 629-652.
- Ridder, H. (2017). The theory contribution of case study research designs. *Business Research*, 10(2), 281-305.
- Riege, A. M. (2003). Validity and reliability tests in case study research: a literature review with ‘hands-on’ applications for each research phase. *Qualitative Market Research*, 6(2), 75.
- Rosenthal, M. (2016). Qualitative research methods: Why, when, and how to conduct interviews and focus groups in pharmacy research. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 8, 509-516.
- Rowley, J. (2012). Conducting research interviews. *Management Research Review*, 35 (3), 260-271.
- Rust, R. T. & Cooil, B. (1994). Reliability Measures for Qualitative Data: Theory and Implications. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31(1), 1-14.
- Ryan, G. W. (1999). Measuring the typicality of text: Using multiple coders for more than just reliability and validity checks. *Human Organisation*, 58 (3), 313–22.
- Ryan, T. (2015). Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Review of Literature. *Quality Assurance in Higher Educaiton*. 5 (4), 257-269.
- Sandelowski, M. (1995). Sample size in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing & Health*,

18, 179–183.


- Schneiberg, M., & Clemens, E.S. (2006). The typical tools for the job: Research strategies in institutional analysis. *Sociological Theory*, 3, 195–227.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organisations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and organisations* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sharp, K. (2017). The distinction between academic standards and quality: implications for transnational higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 23(2), 138-152.
- Shaw, M. (2014). *Switchmen of Reform: Competing Conceptions of Public Higher Education Governance in Poland*. Thesis for PhD, Retrieved from: <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/181662>
- Shore, C. & Wright, S. (2003). *Anthropology of Policy: Perspectives on Governance and Power*. Routledge
- Sikes, P. & Potts, A. (2008). *Researching Education from the Inside: Investigations from Within*. Routledge.
- Smith, K. (2010). Assuring quality in transnational higher education: a matter of collaboration or control. *Studies in Higher Education*. 35(7), 793-806.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln, 443–466. London, Thousand Oaks, CA/Baltimore: Sage/The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stephenson, J. B. & Greer, L. S. (1981). Ethnographers in Their Own Cultures: Two Appalachian Cases. *Human Organization*, 40 (2), 123-130.
- Strang, D., & Soule, S. A. (1998). Diffusion in organisations and social movements: From hybrid corn to poison pills. In J. Hagan & K. Cook (Eds.). *Annual review of sociology*, 24, 265–290. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academic of Management Review*, 20(3), 571-610.
- Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20 (3), 345-376.

- The Higher Education Evaluation Center (HEEC), 2013, Introduction to HEEC. Available at: <http://www.heec.edu.cn/modules/zhongxingaikuang.jsp?type=0>.
- The Glossary of Education Reform. (2016). Student Engagement. <https://www.edglossary.org/student-engagement/>
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). (2004). Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (including e-learning). The Observatory of Borderless Higher Education.
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). (2015). The UK quality code for higher education: overview and the expectations. Retrieved from [qaa.ac.uk](http://qaa.ac.uk)
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure*. Oxford University Press
- Thornton, P. H. & Ocasio, W. (2008). Institutional Logics. *The Sage Handbook of Organisational Institutionalism*, 99-129
- Thornton, P. H. (2002). The rise of the corporation in a craft industry: Conflict and conformity in institutional logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45, 81–101.
- Thornton, P. H. (2004). *Market from culture: Institutional logics and organizational decisions in higher education*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Business Books.
- Thornton, Patricia. H., Jones. C., & Kury, K. (2005). Institutional logics and institutional change in organisations: Transformation in accounting, architecture, and publishing. *Research in the Sociology of Organisations*, (Special Issue, Transformation in Cultural Industries).
- Tracey, P., Phillips, N., & Jarvis, O. (2011). Bridging institutional entrepreneurship and the creation of new organisational forms. *Organisation Science*, 22(1), 60–80.
- Tsoukas, H. (1996), The firm as a distributed knowledge system: a constructionist approach. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(1), 11-26.
- UNESCO/OECD. (2005). Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education. Retrieved November 30, 2013, from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/51/35779480.pdf>.
- University of Liverpool. (2007). The University of Liverpool's first accreditation report.

- University of Liverpool. (2010). The annual monitoring visit report.
- Upton, S. & Warshaw, J. B. (2017). Evidence of hybrid institutional logics in the US public research university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39 (1), 89-103.
- Upton, S., & Warshaw, J.B. (2017). Evidence of hybrid institutional logics in the US public Research university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39(1), 89-103.
- VanWynsberghe, R. & Khan, S. (2007). Redefining Case Study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 6(2), 80-94.
- Vaughan, D. (1992). Theory elaboration: The heuristics of case analysis. In *What is a case?*.ed. C.C. Ragin, and H.S. Becker, 173–202. Exploring the foundations of social inquiry: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York.
- Vichers, I., Lyon, F., Sepulveda, L., & McMullin, C. (2017). Public service innovation and multiple institutional logics: The case of hybrid social enterprise providers of health and wellbeing. *Research Policy*, 46, 1755-1768.
- Voronov, M., Clercq, C., & Hinings, CR (Bob). (2013). Institutional complexity and logic engagement: An investigation of Ontario fine wine. *Human Relation*, 66, 1563.
- Wakeling, K. (2014). We're all on the path ourselves: the reflective practitioner in participatory arts with older people. *Journal of Arts & Communities*, 6(2&3).
- Wang, L. (2014). Quality assurance in higher education in China: Control, accountability and freedom. *Policy and Society*, 33, 253-262.
- Warren, R. L. (1967). The Interorganizational Field as a Focus for Investigation *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12(3), 396-419.
- Washington, M., & Ventresca, M. J. (2004). How organisations change: The role of institutional sport mechanisms in the incorporation of higher education visibility strategies, 1874–1995. *Organisational Science*, 15, 82–97.
- Wilkins, S. & Huisman, J. (2012). The international branch campus as transnational strategy in higher education. *High Education*, 64, 627-645.
- Wood, D. J., & Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *Journal of*

- Applied Behavioural Science*, 27, 139-162.
- Woodhouse, D. (1999). Quality and Quality Assurance. *Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education*: 29-40, OECD-IMHE.
- XJTLU. (2014). *Sino-foreign Cooperative University Union Launched*. Retrieved from <http://news.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/recent-news/4955-sino-foreign-cooperative-universities-union-inaugurated.html>
- Yang, H. (2012). *Western concepts, Chinese context: A note on teaching accounting Offshore*. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning*, 7(1), 20-30.
- Yang, R. (2008). Transnational higher education in China: contexts, characteristics and concerns. *Australian Journal of Education*, 52(3), 272-286.
- Yin, R. K. (2008). *Case study research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. The Guilford Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*, 5th ed. London, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Method*. SAGE Publications.
- Zhang, X.J., & Wang, L. (2015). Integrating Chinese and western practices for undergraduate teaching quality assurance system. 融合中西方实践的大学本科教学质量保障体系。
- Zhuang, L., & Tang, A. X. (2012). Sino-UK transnational education in China: rhetoric versus reality. *Journal of Technology Management in China*, 7(2), 218-234.
- Ziguras, C. & McBurnie, G. (2008). *The Impact of Trade Liberalization on Transnational Education*. Routledge.

## Appendix A: Ethical Approval Form of the University of Liverpool

		UNIVERSITY OF <b>LIVERPOOL</b>	<b>ONLINE</b> <b>PROGRAMMES</b>
Dear Christy Wang			
I am pleased to inform you that the <u>EdD</u> Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.			
Sub-Committee: <u>EdD</u> Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)			
Review type: Expedited			
PI:			
School: Lifelong Learning			
Title: How an organization responds to multiple institutional logics: integrating UK & Chinese quality assurance systems in one university			
First Reviewer: <u>Dr.</u> Lucilla Crosta			
Second Reviewer: <u>Dr.</u> Julie Regan			
Other members of the Committee: <u>Dr.</u> Eileen Kennedy, <u>Dr.</u> Janet Hanson, <u>Dr.</u> Kathleen Kelm, <u>Dr.</u> Rita Kop, <u>Dr.</u> <u>Kalman</u> Winston, <u>Dr.</u> Viola Manokore			
Date of Approval: 9/06/2017			
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:			
<b>Conditions</b>			
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the <u>EdD</u> Thesis Primary Supervisor.	



This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc>.

Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards,

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD, VPREC



## Appendix B: Ethical Approval Form of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University



Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University  
西交利物浦大學

HS347 Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University  
111 Ren'ai Road, Dushu Lake Higher Education Town SIP  
Suzhou 215123,  
P.R. China.

9 June 2017

Dear Christy Wang,

Proposal Number: 16-02-13

Title: How an organization responds to multiple institutional logics:  
integrating UK & Chinese quality assurance systems in one university

Your application for research ethics approval, received on 5 June, has been reviewed and approved by Chair's action. Please be advised that you would have to cite the proposal number in all future correspondence with the Research Ethics Subcommittee about this project.

For reference, the latest version of the document 'Ethics in Research: Provisional Guidelines on Best Practice' is attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elmer V Villanueva'.

Elmer V Villanueva, MD ScM FACE  
Chair, Research Ethics Subcommittee

## Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



Committee on Research Ethics

### Participant Information Sheet Guidelines

#### 1. Title of Study

How an organization responds to multiple institutional logics: integrating UK & Chinese quality assurance systems in one university

#### 2. Version Number and Date

Version 2.0, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

#### 3. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives and GP if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

#### 4. What is the purpose of the study?

Transnational higher education is becoming a fast growing and increasingly researched area as China emerging as one of the most promising markets. Much research into of transnational education focuses on cultural differences and learning styles, others conduct comparative studies on joint-venture programmes, most researches on quality assurance focus on challenges of quality assurance in transnational education or analysis the quality assurance from the perspectives of quality assurance agencies. Analysis of the process of integrating different quality assurance systems in one university, from the perspective of how the university responds to multiple institutional logics has not been researched in previous studies. This research takes Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) as the case to examine how a Higher Education Institution responds to multiple institutional logics during the process of integrating UK & Chinese quality assurance systems. Transnational Higher Education Institutions normally face a range of institutional complexity, such as different expectations from students with different cultural background, distinct perceptions on power relationship between academic staff and student, and different roles of authority in peer review. This research will focus on how structure and identity shape and influence organisation's and individual's responses to multiple institutional logics caused by embedding UK & Chinese quality assurance systems in a joint-venture university. To collect data for the research, documentary analysis and interviews would be used as research methods. The data collection of the research will focus on tracking the decisions related to quality assurance during the ten years of XJTLU's development, with interviews of key faculty members involved in the QA process, professional service staff responsible for accreditation by the University of Liverpool and leaders of XJTLU. It is expected that the central theoretical contribution of this research will enrich theoretical framework of how organisational structure shape organisations experience institutional complexity and determine the repertoire of organisational responses.

**5. Why have I been chosen to take part?**

As one of the key members who have directly involved in the University of Liverpool's accreditation on Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, your experience and understanding of the quality assurance policies and procedures would provide valuable information and rich context for the study.

**6. Do I have to take part?**

No. Your participation is totally voluntary even if you have begun participation. You are free to withdraw anytime without explanation or penalty. If you choose not to participate, no data related to you or your work will be used or reported in the project.

**7. What will happen if I take part?**

If you agree to take part the research project, you will be interviewed by the researcher with questions related to your experience about the accreditation and quality assurance audit by the University of Liverpool. The interview will be audio recorded and the information you provided will be used for data analysis. Data analysis will be started after your consent form being signed and received by me. No further data would be collected.

**8. Expenses and / or payments**

It is not anticipated that any expenses or payments will incur from participation in this research study.

**9. Are there any risks in taking part?**

It is not anticipated that you will experience any risks or harm from participation in this research project. However, as the accreditation of XJTLU's degree was a critical project to the University, the preparation process was quite stressful to staff involved. Questions about the accreditation may cause them recall the stressful period, and make participants feel a little bit stressed. The researcher will ensure that the study won't dwell on the areas that may cause potential stress to participants involved in the study. Interviews would be dealt with sensitively in a more informed fashion.

**10. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

Participation in the study may bring further insights about participants' work and the way they deal with multiple logics in their work. Therefore, it is expected that there are potential benefits for participants.

**11. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting Niya Wang (+86 186-6258-2355, [Christy.wang@my.ohecampus.com](mailto:Christy.wang@my.ohecampus.com)) and I will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to me with then you should contact my supervisor at [Peter.Kahn@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Peter.Kahn@liverpool.ac.uk) or the Research Participant Advocate at 001-612-312-1210 or [liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com](mailto:liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com). When contacting the Research Participant Advocate, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make."

**12. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

The researcher will not disclose to any third party that you participated in this research project. Any data you generated will be kept anonymous. Anonymous data

generated from participants in this project will be stored for five years in the researcher's secured external hard drive with password protection.

**Disclosure of criminal activity**

None

**13. What will happen to the results of the study?**

Anonymous results will be compiled and reported only within the University of Liverpool to fulfil the thesis requirements and shared within the Doctoral Programme of Higher Education of the University of Liverpool. Participant's data will be converted to digital data and made unidentifiable. Other personal information such as name and departments would be removed.

**14. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You may withdraw without explanation. Data up to the period of withdrawal may be used, if you are happy for this to be done. Otherwise you may request that all your data destroyed and no further use is made for them.

**15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

- **Contact details:**  
**Tel:** +86-186-6258-2355  
**Email:** [christy.wang@my.ohecampus.com](mailto:christy.wang@my.ohecampus.com)  
**Work address:** No. 111 Ren'ai Road, Suzhou Industrial Park, Jiangsu, China, 215123
- **The contact details of Research Participant Advocate**  
**001-612-312-1210 or email [liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com](mailto:liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com)**
- **The contact details of my supervisor**  
[Peter.Kahn@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Peter.Kahn@liverpool.ac.uk)

Please keep/print a copy of the Participant Information Sheet for your reference. Please contact me and or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool with any question or concerns you may have.

Researcher

Date

Signature

## Appendix D: Research Consent Form



### Committee on Research Ethics

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** How an organization responds to multiple institutional logics: integrating UK & Chinese quality assurance systems in one university

**Researcher(s):** Niya Wang

Please  
initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

**Principal Investigator:**  
Name  
Work Address  
Work Telephone  
Work Email

**Student Researcher:**  
Name  
Work Address  
Work Telephone  
Work Email

#### FOR MARIARC PROJECTS ONLY:

- I agree that my GP may be contacted if any unexpected results are found in relation to my health.
- ☐